

A
PRESERVATIVE
AGAINST
SEPARATION
FROM THE
Church of England.

WHEREIN
The Unlawfulness of it is Proved.
AND
The Chief Objections of the Dis-
senters Answered. *g.g*

Directed to his Parishioners.

By SOLOMON PAGIS, Rector of
Farnborow in Somersetshire.

L O N D O N:

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PRESENTATIVE

AGAINST

SEPARATION

FROM THE

Church of England

WHEREBY

The Unitarians of this Island

AND

The Unitarians of the City

of London

Do hereby

Resolved that

they will

not

join in any

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at the White-Hart in St. Paul's Church-
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Nonconformity, set forth in the Tenth Chapter
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History of his Life, and Times.* By Benj. Hoadly,
M. A. Octavo.

*A Serious Admonition to Mr. Calamy, occa-
sion'd by the First Part of his Defence of Mode-
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*A Persuasive to Conformity: Or, The
Reasonableness of Constant Communion with the
Church of England, Represented to the Dissent-
ing Laity.* By Benj. Hoadly, M. A. *Printed at*

*A Vindication of Dr. Sherlock, Dean of
St. Pauls, in Answer to Mr. Nathaniel Taylor's
late Treatise, Intituled, Dr. Sherlock's Case of
Church Communion, and his Letter to Anonymus
consider'd, &c. Together with a Reply to his Vin-
dication of the Dissenters from the Charge of Schism.*

A
PRESERVATIVE
AGAINST
SEPARATION
FROM THE
Church of *England*.

IT is the duty of Ministers, who have taken upon them the care of Souls, to use all lawful means that are in their power, for the preservation of their flocks from Sin and Errors: And especially when they see them in any danger of falling into the commission of a Sin out of ignorance; not knowing it to be a Sin, they ought to tell them their mistakes, and shew them by good and plain reasons how dangerous it is to continue in the same error.

There is a general opinion received amongst the common people of *England*, and consequently amongst you, That there is no Sin in Seperating from the Church of *England*, and in joyning to other Congregations; though it is supposed that our Church is a true Church of Christ. I take this opinion to be an error; and a very dangerous
one.

one, which hath several ill consequences. Therefore I think it my duty to endeavour to cure you of it, by proving the unlawfulness of a Separation from our established and national Church.

I am perswaded that there are several persons in this Parish, and in all other parts of the Nation, who, if they had the least suspicion of committing Sin by separating from the Church of *England*, would by no means venture the hazard of it: And I am likewise perswaded that there are several well meaning Souls, who ingage themselves in the dissenting party out of Conscience, taking it to be the safest way to secure their future happiness: And most part of these are such, whose temporal Callings and common stations in the World do not give them leave to enter into the particulars of this matter, which they think only Learned Men are concerned in. But 'tis a great mistake: for as every particular Man is obliged to profess a Religion, so every particular Man ought to Examine that Religion which he intends to profess, or is actually in the profession of: and he ought not (as those of the Church of *Rome* do) pin his Faith upon the Sleeve of another man. But it is known that the first education is the chief motive which engageth most part of Men in the profession of their Religion; and if some of them resolve not to be guided by it, they will only look upon the outward appearances of Religion, and

and fix their minds upon that which suiteth best with their natural Inclinations and Humors. For Example; A Man who is of a mild and sober Temper will be inclined to follow the dissenting party, because such qualities are much affected amongst them: But it is very certain that these well-minded persons do not so much as put the matter into a question, whether to go off from the Church to the Dissenters be sinful or no: And if any of them deliberate about it, they conclude it to be either indifferent, or even much better than to continue with us.

Wherefore I design to make you sensible of the unreasonableness of this opinion, and to make appear plainly the unlawfulness of a Separation from the Church of *England*; which I shall prove by four Arguments.

The First shall be taken from the nature of that Separation.

The Second from one of the chief Ends and Purposes of the Christian Religion.

The Third from the practice of our Saviour and his Apostles, and of the whole Christian Church in her first and purest Ages.

And the Fourth from the common opinion and practice of most part of the Old Non-conformists of England.

That shall be the First part of this work.

In the Second Part; I intend to Examine and Answer the chief objections of our Dissenting Brethren.

In the performance of this undertaking, I will take care to confine my self within the limits of Christian moderation and Brotherly Love, avoiding all bitterness and personal Reflections.

It is your particular good and instruction that I am at ; either in reference to those of you that incline to the Dissenting party, or in behalf of them that are already engaged in it: Though, God be thanked, the number of these last is as yet but small. But if it be Gods pleasure, that the perusing of these Papers shall have some good effects upon others besides you : As I shall be very glad to have procured some general benefit to the Church, so I shall think my self obliged to return my most humble thanks to God Almighty for bestowing his blessing upon my weak labours.

ARGUMENT I.

Taken from the nature of that Separation.

A Causeless Separation from an Established Christian Church is an unlawful Separation. But the Separation of the Dissenters from the Church of *England* is a Causeless Separation, therefore their Separation is unlawful.

I will suppose that none of the Dissenters will deny the truth of this proposition, That a Causeless Separation from an Established Church

Church is unlawful. For this is the plain Notion of the Sin of Schism, to break Communion with a Christian Church without Cause and Reason. And if the Dissenters were convinced that they have no just Reason to separate, they must acknowledge themselves guilty of that Sin, and then there would be no need to proceed any further in this Controversie; but we might come presently to a Conclusion, and exhort them to make as much hast as they can to repent, and re-enter into the Peace of the Church, Conforming themselves to the Practice, Worship, and Ceremonies of it.

Wherefore they will deny the Second Proposition, and say, that their Separation from the Church of *England* is not a causeless Separation, but founded upon good and substantial Reasons.

My Business now is to prove the contrary, and the Truth of this Proposition, viz. their Separation from the Church of *England* is a causeless Separation, which I make good in this manner.

If the Church of *England* be a true Church of Christ, and keep all the Essentials and Fundamentals of Religion, and imposeth nothing against the Word of God, so that Christians may work their Salvation in joyning and adhering to it, then there is no lawful Cause for Separation from it. But, by our Dissenting Brethrens own Confession, the Church of *England* is a true Church of Christ, and keepeth

all the Foundations of Religion; so that Christians may work their Salvation in joyn-
ing and adhearing to it: Therefore there is
no just and lawful Cause of a Separation.

It is granted, that if any Dissenter were
able to prove, that some of the Fundamen-
tals of Religion are destroyed in the Doctrine,
or Worship, or Discipline of the Church,
then there would be sufficient Cause and Rea-
son for a Separation: But, till that be done, we
have great Reason to conclude their Sepa-
ration to be unlawful.

They say, to this, That it is not necessary
to justify their Separation, that our Church
should destroy the Foundations of Religion: But
it sufficeth, that there are several things practised in
the Worship, Ceremonies, and Discipline of it, which
are unlawful, and they cannot in Conscience joyn
with us in a Worship which they believe defective,
as having no Foundation in the Word of God.

I have several things to reply to this main
Objection.

1. I desire that you should reflect upon
the Dissenters Confession, That our Church
is a true Church of Christ, and that Chri-
stians may be saved in joyning with, and ad-
hering to it. For if it be so, Why should
not they be saved in this Church as well as o-
thers? What can they propose to themselves
more in any Church but the Glory of God,
and their own Salvation? And if this
may be attained without a Separation,
Why should they cause such a Ferment in the

Na-

Nation, and disturb the Peace and Unity of the Church, for the doing of that which they themselves own may be performed without it?

They say to this, That tho' the Conscience of some Christians telleth them that they may be saved in the Church of England; other Mens Consciences may tell them other things, and they must follow their Conscience, otherwise they shall be guilty of Unfaithfulness and Hypocrisie. Now then we are come to the great Point of Conscience, and here lies the Force of their Argument: A Man must never act against his Conscience: But the Dissenters should act against their Conscience if they did Conform to the Church of England: Therefore they must not Conform.

I grant that we must do nothing against our Conscience: But we must do all we can to instruct it, and take serious Notice of that which is to be the Guide of it, and let it be ruled thereby.

The Word of God, his Sacred Law, must be the Rule of our Conscience, in Matters of Religion. If the Church of England prescribe any thing against this Divine Rule of our Conscience, it is well done in our Brethren not to yield to those Prescriptions that are contrary to it: And they are in the right to clear their Consciences, and act according to the Dictates thereof. But they must prove that there are Practices imposed in the Church of England, contrary to the Word

of God, before they can make good this Plea about *Conscience*; otherwise we shall have Reason to believe, that what they call *Conscience*, is nothing but Humour, or Fancy, or Passion, or some other temporal and worldly Motive. Pray make this General Observation, That whatsoever undertaketh to direct or guide our Actions, to tell us our Duty in Matters of Religion, and hath not some Law in Force to authorize those Directions, is not *Conscience*, whatsoever it is. The *Conscience* of a Man will not change the Nature of a Thing. If it be good and lawful, it will remain so, in spite of a Man's blind and ignorant *Conscience*: And if it be unlawful, or against the Law of God, it will remain in the same Condition, notwithstanding the erroneous Dictates of *Conscience*.

I wish that Word *Conscience*, were not so much abused by our Brethren; but rather that they would apply themselves to inform their *Conscience*, by the Rule which must be the true Guide of it. They should rather make *Conscience* not to divide the Church and tear it in pieces, rather, I say, than studiously to seek after, and raise Scruples of *Conscience* in Matters indifferent and lawful in themselves. They strain at a Gnat and swallow a Camel.

2. To answer more positively to their

against Separation.

Assertion, That there are several Practices in the Church of *England* which are unlawful which maketh their Separation necessary; I would fain know their Meaning by that Word, *unlawful*; it appears to me that the Word it self importeth its Signification. Whatsoever is unlawful, is that which is against some Law; either the Law of God, or the Law of Nature, or the Humane Law of a lawful Authority. I have no Notion of any Law, but of these three Sorts. Now what can there be in the Worship or Discipline of our Church contrary to any of these Laws to make it unlawful? Is it the constant Form of a Liturgy, or any particular part of it? Or the crossing of Children in their Baptism? Or the having Godfathers and Godmothers in that Sacrament? Or the Kneeling at the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper? These are Instances of the pretended unlawful Practices that are observed in our Church, hereafter I shall have occasion to speak to these in particular; but now I say only this in general. Can any Dissenter bring any Law whatsoever, either of God, or of Nature, or of any Human Lawful Power, which is contradicted by any of these pretended unlawful Practices? We must especially apply our selves to the Word of God, which must be our chief Rule in Religious Matters. Can the Dissenters cite one Place of the Scripture against a stinted Liturgy, or against ours in particular, or against

gainst any part of it? If they can do so much, then I will own the unlawfulness of our Service: But till then they must give me leave to believe, and I exhort you to believe with me, that there is nothing unlawful in the Practice of our Church.

If they tell us, that it is sufficient in Matters of Religion to make a Practice unlawful, that it is not prescribed in the Word of God; we must answer, That if this were generally true, then our Brethren themselves should be guilty of many unlawful Practices: Forasmuch as they cannot produce any lawful Authority from the Word of God for them. For Example, performing their Divine Service at such a time of the Day, rather than at another; observing a constant Rule in their Devotions; Praying standing, or kneeling; reading such a Portion of the Scripture on certain days; sitting at the Sacrament; adding several Prayers at the Celebration of both Sacraments; and a great many other such Practices; for the Lawfulness of which they can no more bring any Authority from the Scripture than we can, and perhaps less than we, for our pretended unlawful Practices. Therefore you see how groundless is that way of arguing against us, That *whatsoever is imposed upon Christians in the Divine Service, which hath not a Divine Authority for its Prescription, is unlawful.* We have a general Command of St. Paul, to do every thing in the Church in Order, Decently, and

and to Edification : That is our Warrant for the ordering of our Worship. The Matter and Essentials of it, we have them prescribed in the Scripture, but the manner of doing it is left to the Superiours of the Church ; and accordingly they have established an Order of Worship and Divine Service which is decent, and hath all the Qualifications requisite to make it acceptable to God, and useful to promote Piety and Devotion amongst Christians. Therefore it is our Duty to comply with that set Form, and submit to all the Orders of it. And from all this I resume the Conclusion of my Argument, That the Separation of the Dissenters is unlawful, seeing they have no cause to sepearate.

But tho some of our Dissenting Brethren may be willing to own that nothing is unlawful in the Worship and Government of our Church, according to the strict sense of that Word [unlawful] that is, tho they own that there is nothing taught or prescribed in our Church directly against the Law of God ; yet they are not willing to yield the Cause. But they say, that to make their Separation lawful, it is sufficient that there be several things defective in our Church ; and that the way which they follow is much more perfect than that of the Church. I answer,

I. It is very certain, that there is now no Church Government, but there may be in it some defects ; and we cannot expect it to be otherwise, as long as it is put into the Hands

Hands of Men that are not infallible. And I suppose that there are no Dissenting Congregations that will pretend to that uppermost Perfection, That no Defect can be found in their ways of Worship and Discipline: So that if we grant them such Defects in our Church that are not Material and Fundamental, we have Reason to expect as much Condescension in reference to their own. And this Grant on both sides, will reduce the Dispute to these two Points: First, To know which of them two are less defective, the Church of *England*, or the separate Congregations. Secondly, Supposing that the Church of *England* hath more Faults, whether the Pretence of Reformation can justify their Separation.

To enter into a particular Consideration of the Defects of the dissenting Congregations, we should examine the several Sects which are amongst them: But because this would engage us too far, we must be content to observe some of the Deficiencies of the dissenting Party in general: And I can mark several which are not to be found in the Church of *England*, and yet much more considerable than any that can be charged upon our Church.

1. They cannot prove the Settlement of their Church Government by any lawful Authority, neither Spiritual nor Temporal. None but private Men, who had no Commission neither from the Church nor from the

the State, did undertake the setting up of their Congregations. This is a real Defect, which affects the very Foundation of their Church Government; it hath no lawful Authority to build upon, and therefore it is builded upon Sand, it cannot stand.

If they say, *they have the Word of God for their Authority, and Christ is the Foundation of their Church;* This is no sufficient Answer: For tho' Christ himself has given his Doctrine, and delivered the Materials and Ingredients wherewith his Church was to be built up; yet he left the ordering and settling the way and manner both of Worship and Church Government to his Ministers. For, pray observe, That we are not here to consider the Doctrines of the Church, and the Substance or material Part of the Divine Worship; we do all agree together, our dissenting Brethren and we, that the Doctrine of the Gospel is infallible and unalterable; and that God Almighty is the Author and Founder of it, as well as of that which is essential to the Worship of the Church: But the Dispute betwixt us is in reference to the outward manner and circumstances of Worship and Government, which our Saviour hath not prescribed himself, but left it to the Discretion of his Ministers, to order and settle those Circumstances as they judge it most convenient, for the Glory of God, and the Edification of the Church. It is that which may be defective, because it is order-
ed

ed by fallible Men: But notwithstanding their Failings, they have received their Commission and Authority from Christ, and this Power and Authority is kept successively in the Ministry of the Church from ages to ages till now; and we prove this successive Ministerial Power to be kept in our Church. But no private Persons can pretend to this Ministerial Power, because that Power is given only to those that are lawfully admitted to the Ministerial Office. Now, you may see that there is no such Fundamental Authority amongst the Dissenters, they cannot prove that they have received their Ministerial Office successively from Christ; and consequently it doth not belong to them to make any alterations in the Worship of God, and in the Government of the Church. It is to no purpose to say, that those that were the first Authors of their Church Government were in a Ministerial Office, which they received from a lawful Authority, even from the Church of *England*. This will not prove the Lawfulness of the first Settlement of their Churches: For, suppose One or Two or Three of their first Founders were in the Ministerial Office by a lawful Authority; these have not the Power alone to set up a new Church, and alter the Government which is already established: This Power none but the Superiours of the Church can have, and their unanimous Consent is required for such an Alteration. Otherwise, pray

pray consider what terrible Confusion there might be in the Church, and already is in reference to our dissenting Brethren. Suppose that according to their Principles, every private Man, or every private Minister, had the Power to set up a new Church under pretence of some Defects and want of Reformation grounded only, for those Alterations on the general Rules of the Gospel; then two or three fanciful and whimsical Fellows joyning together might undertake to set up a new Church, and plead the Word of God for their Warrant; And it is easie to see what Disorders and Confusions would follow in the Church from such Principles and Practices. And yet our Dissenters must needs confess that they have no other Foundation for their Church Government, which I think to be in that respect very defective. I am sure there is no such fault to be found in the Church of *England*: For those that set up the first Forndation of her Government, and made her Reformation, had full Power and Authority from Church and State to do it; they were the Superiors and Governours of the Church, they did agree together, all, or the greatest part of them, in those Alterations of the Divine Worship, and Discipline and Government: And as they had the Power to settle those things, so they did order them as they thought fit, for the promoting the Glory of God, and the Peace of the Church, and the Edification and Salvation
of

of Men. I cannot imagine how our Brethren can answer to this Charge of wanting a lawful Authority for the foundation of their Church Government; in which respect we may boldly assert, that their Church is very defective, and ours very perfect.

2. If we consider the worship of the Church of *England*, and compare it with that of the dissenting Congregations, we shall find that ours is much more perfect than theirs. For undoubtedly that uniformity of worship, which is observed in our Church, must needs be preferable to that variety of ways and manners which is to be seen in their Divine Service; every particular Minister having his particular way of Praying; yea, even the same Man altering his own ways as it suiteth best to his present fancy. Pray, who can imagine that these *extempore* Prayers, which may be the fruit of Nature or Art, or of a misguided Zeal and warm Imagination, are to be prefer'd before our Liturgy, that hath been composed by the most eminent of our Clergy consulting and advising together, and taking long and wise deliberations in the ordering of that Form? who can imagine, I say, that those *extempore* Prayers are more excellent than our premeditated Liturgy? Especially if we consider that the Authors of it, not only were many wise Divines, but also had no other aim but to furnish the Church with the best provisions imaginable for the promoting of Piety and Godliness amongst Christians? However,
unless

unless the Dissenters are willing to ascribe the gift of Miracles and Infallibility to their praying Ministers, they cannot deny that when Forty or Sixty wise and Learned Divines meet together to make a Form of Prayers, and take a long time to consult about it, they may be able to do some work less defective, than that which a single Man may do without any premeditation, let his natural and acquired Gifts be never so great and eminent.

Wherefore you see what little probability there is, that their way of worship should be more perfect than that of our Church. But to be better convinced of this it would be but to take the trouble of writing some of their extempore Prayers, though made by some of their Ministers of the first rank, and compare them with our Liturgy, we might let themselves be judges of the difference, without any danger of losing the Cause.

But they will say, *That Church must be the most perfect, which makes the best Christians; but there are generally better Christians amongst us than in the Church of England, therefore our Church must be the most perfect.*

I deny that the dissenting Churches have better Christians than the Church of England, for several reasons.

1. It is impossible that those Men who are guilty of Schism that break the peace and unity of the Church, and rent in pieces the mystical Body of Christ, should be better Christians than those who make it their business to

maintain all the Members of the Church in unity and concord. It shall be made evident, before I put an end to this discourse, that the Dissenters are the first, and the Members of our Church the others.

2. Though there are a great many lewd and prophane persons, who pretend to be of the Church of *England*, this doth not make our Church more defective than that of the Dissenters; For the good or bad behaviour of some of the Members of a Church doth not make the perfection or the imperfection of that Church otherwise; In our Saviours time the Sect of the Pharisees must have been much better than the rest of the Jews, for they kept the outward observances of the Law much Stricter than their Brethren; and yet you see how our Saviour upbraideth them for their hypocrisie, false glosses, and other deficiencies. Thus in the Church of *Rome*, the austerities and mortifications of several of their Religious Houses do not make their Church the better. The *Turks* are great zealots, and exact observers of their *Alcoran*; and those that have Travelled in their Countries relate, that generally their Lives and Conversations are much better than the Lives and Conversations of Christians: And yet our dissenting Brethren will not say that the *Turks* Religion is more perfect than that of Christians. No Men in the World keep better Orders, or have better Morals than the *Socinians* in *Holland*; and yet we will not so much as

allow

allow them the name of Christians. Therefore you see what a poor Argument it is, to say, that the Dissenters good Lives and Conversations are a proof of the greater perfection of their Churches.

But besides, it is a general Observation made of all false and superstitious Religions, That their Professors commonly are more Zealous and eager in favouring their Errors and promoting their superstitious Worship, than the Orthodox are; and this hath been more peculiar to all the Schismatics, that have been in the Christian Church since her first Establishment; therefore it cannot be expected to be otherwise now: Especially if you consider, that when the Establishment of the Church hath been of a long time standing, and that there is no danger of any alteration or subversion, being a National Church, commonly there is a remissness in the execution of the Ecclesiastical Laws and Discipline, which giveth more occasion to Lewdness and Corruption. And this remissness, I confess, is a defect in our Church, and I heartily wish it were otherwise; (hereafter I shall make it appear, that the Dissenters are chiefly the cause of this remissness). But this doth not import a defect in the Laws and Constitution it self of our Church. There are good Laws and Canons provided for the well-ordering the Lives and Conversations of the People; and if that discipline were well observed, and ill-Livers punished according to Law, then there could

be no occasion to find fault with our Church Government, in that respect.

Speaking in general, when the Glory of God and the Salvation of Men are the only motives that encourage the Interest of Religion, the Natural Corruption of Men maketh them less concern'd and affectionate in the promoting of it, than when those motives are intermixed with Temporal and Carnal designs; and whether this mixture is not to be found among our Dissenting Brethren, it is an easie matter to determine. And I doubt not but I may (without any just imputation of Uncharitableness) boldly affirm, that the supporting of their separate fraternities, and the gaining Credit and High Reputation to their party in pursuance of that main design, are some of the grand motives which do bear sway in their outward shews of extraordinary Piety and Circumspection: And the ordinary and common sort of People, who are not able to dive into the deep Intrigues of a Faction, are easily imposed upon and ensnared by such outward shews of Religion.

3. But notwithstanding all this, I say in the third and last place, that in truth there are as Good and Godly Christians, and even better in the Church of *England*, than amongst the Dissenters. It may be those of our Church make not it so much their business to make a great outward shew of Piety and Devotion, because they cannot endure any thing that looks like

like Hypocrisie, and do hate Pharisaical Maximes: But whosoever will apply himself to examine the Lives and Conversations of the true Members of our Church, who follow exactly her Doctrine, and Conform on all respects to her Worship and Government, and are grounded upon a clear and distinct knowledge of Religion, shall find that no Christian Church doth afford better Christians than ours in all respects: And those are not few in number; but a great many such are to be found both amongst the Clergy and Laity. I heartily wish there were no others; but this is hardly to be expected in any Christian Church before the *Millennarian* Age; then (if ever such an Age is to be) as there shall be no more any Prophane and ill-living Man, so the Church shall be purged of all Schismatical and Hypocritical Congregations.

So far, I hope, I have made it appear that our Separatists have no reason at all to ascribe a greater perfection to their Congregations than to the Church of *England*; and therefore with as little reason, they being in this Plea to justify their Separation.

But suppose they had gained this point, that really there were more defects in the Worship, or Discipline, and Government of our Church, than there is in their Congregations, they could get but little advantage over us thereby, and their Separation should be no less an Unlawful Separation; as

I am now going to prove in my Second and
.. Third Arguments.

ARGUMENT. II.

*Taken from one of the Chief ends and purposes
of the Gospel.*

THat Separation from an Established Christian Church, which opposeth and destroyeth one of the chief ends and purposes of the Gospel, is an unlawful Separation. But the Dissenters Separation opposeth and destroyeth one of the chief ends and purposes of the Gospel: Therefore their Separation is unlawful.

I suppose our dissenting Brethren will not deny, that one of the chief ends and purposes of the Gospel, is to keep all Christians in Peace, Unity, and Concord: This is too plainly declared by our Saviour to be denied. Nay, he is so earnest to have all his Disciples to Live in Peace and Unity amongst themselves, that he maketh it one of the chief Petitions to his Father, in his Excellent Prayer, sometime before his Death; Neither, saith he, *Pray I for them alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one, as thou Father art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us,* John 17. 20, 21. And in some of his last Words to his Disciples, as a Legacy he left to them, he saith,

saith, *Peace I leave with you, My Peace I give unto you.* Now, pray consider whether this Legacy and Gracious Gift of Christ to his Church, is to be so little regarded by her Members, as that they may have the Liberty to despise and destroy it upon such inconsiderable accounts as the Dissenters can give of the causes of their separation? If I can have any notion of this gracious Peace which Christ hath left to his Church, I may be allowed to say, that it doth consist, not only in that Unity which is between Christ and his Church, but also between all the Members of his Church among themselves, that they may all joyn together, not only in the same Faith and Doctrine, but also in Love, Communion, and Charity; that as they have the same Christ for their Saviour, so they should direct to him the same Worship and Adoration, and with one Heart, and one Mouth, glorify their Common Father which is in Heaven.

I confess most part of our dissenting Brethren hold the same Faith and the same Gospel with our Church: But can they say they have the same Sacraments of our Church, when for the sake of her Sacraments they separate from her? Can they pretend to the same Worship of the Church, when they find so much fault with the Worship that the Church observeth, as to separate from

her upon that account? Can they pretend to live in Communion with all the true Members of the Church, when actually they separate from them in that very time, when they should joyn together their Prayers and Supplications, their Worship and Adoration with them?

Can they pretend to live in Love and Charity with their fellow Christians? But their Separation is a continual breach of those Christian Vertues; and the woful Mischiefs which dayly issue out of it both in Church and State, are too visible tokens that the Peace of Christ is broken to pieces by it. Not only we see Churches set up against Churches, Altars against Altars; but what troubles and confusions, what hatred and jealousies, what strifes and divisions, what parties and factions, what contempt of the Holy things and of the whole Christian Church; when every private separate Congregation pretends to be the best Church of Christ? By this Separation the Ministers of the Established Church are despised and derided, they are forsaken by their Flocks; and disheartned from doing their Office, the success of their Labours is obstructed by the continual surmises of their opposers. For where is that respect and reverence, which is due to the Ministers of the Lord? As the affairs do now stand, hardly a Lawful Pastor of the Church, can use his due liberty in rebuking
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any of his Parishioners for their Sins, but he is in danger to lose his Sheep out of his Fold. Hath a Parishioner any private Difference with his Minister, upon some temporal account, (as it happeneth but too often in respect of Tithes.) O presently that Minister is taxed with the hard Names of an unjust and covetous Man; he is not worthy to be a Minister, he must be heard no more; away the angry Man goeth to the Meeting, thither he carries along with him his Gall and Resentment, a spirit of hatred never forsaketh him; and yet that Man is worthy to be admitted as a Member of the best Reformed Church, he is now become a true Convert, the Lord hath opened his Eyes, and Touched his Heart, and brought him into the best way to Heaven.

These are considerable mischiefs, which happen dayly in the Church, and fill it with confusions and distractions. I shall insist no longer upon such, lest I be thought privately concern'd in them; But what if I be? I dare say, that hardly is there a Minister who hath cure of Souls in *England*, who doth not lye under the same circumstances; but if from those private piques and quarrels, which are so many products of this fatal Separation, you turn your eyes towards those more publick and general disorders and calamities, which have afflicted both our Church and State, and owe their rise to the same Separation: There you may see Plots and Conspiracies, Open and Civil Wars, Rebellions

Rebellions of Subjects against their lawful Sovereigns, Murders and Vastations; in a Word, all the Evils and Miseries that Hell it self can contrive, which this Nation hath felt and feelth still to this Day, and shall never be free from, as long as the Peace and Unity of the Church are broken by this woful Separation.

I do not doubt at all, but there are several good People engaged unhappily in that Separation: But they must needs be beguiled and intoxicated, and possessed with very ill and groundless Prejudices against the Church of *England*; for they cannot so much as open their Eyes, and make use of their natural Sense and Reason, but they must perceive how all this is opposed to the Peace which our Saviour hath purchased for his Church, at so dear a Rate as the shedding of his Sacred Blood. How can their Ministers pray for the Peace of *Jerusalem*, while their whole Ministry is a continual Breach of it? How can they read that Portion of the Gospel to their People, which was the happy Tidings of a Saviour coming into the World, uttered by *Angels, Glory to God in the Highest, on Earth Peace, good Will towards Men*, when they tread under foot the beauty of that glorious Peace which came down from Heaven to abide on Earth? What Exhortation to Unity and Concord can they give to the Members of the Church, when they themselves stand at defiance with and so obstinately

ly differ from their Mother Church, from the Spouse of Christ and his Mystical Body? For, by their own Confession, they can have no other Notion of the Church of England; she is their Mother, they came out of her Bosom, and have unnaturally forsaken her; they own her also to be the Spouse and the Mystical Body of Christ; for they acknowledge her to be a true Christian Church, Christ abideth with her, she is favoured with his Blessings and the Comforts of his Holy Spirit; but they will have no share in her Blessings and Comforts. Can they say that the Spirit of Christ dwelleth with them? But that Divine Spirit, is a Spirit of Peace, Unity and Concord. *Peace be with you*, saith our Saviour to his Church, after his Resurrection: But we see no other Spirit reigning in our Separatists, than that of Division, Hatred and Bitterness. In a Word, their Separation is a plain protestation that they will have no Peace with the Church; for if they desired to have it, they would not run away from her.

I confess, if it could be proved by our dissenting Brethren, that the Doctrine of the Church of England is Heretical, or her Worship Idolatrous; or that the Souls of Men were in any danger by adhering to, and professing her Doctrine, and submitting to her Government; then, Indeed, a Separation from her would not only be lawful, but even necessary. Thus all Protestant Churches have

have sufficiently justified their Separation from the Church of *Rome*; and they cannot be charged with having destroyed the Peace and Unity of the Church, seeing that Church had given room to a just Separation, by the false and heretical Doctrines, and Idolatrous Worship, which she absolutely impleth upon the Faith and Practice of all her Professors; so that their Salvation was much endangered thereby: And high time it was that this Command of the Lord should be obeyed, *Come forth out of Babylon, O my People.*

But I hope our dissenting Brethren do not believe the Church of *England* to be so bad and so corrupted, as to be parallel'd with the Church of *Rome*; they own her to be a true Church of Christ, that her Doctrine is pure and undefiled, and that Salvation may be obtained in her Profession, tho' they pretend that she is defective in her way of Worship and Government. What then can be desired more than a general Conformity to this good Christian Church? That so this precious Gift, which our Gracious Lord and Master was pleased to give to his Church, might be restored to her; I mean, a *Christian Peace, Unity and Concord.*

I dare say that the best Men amongst our dissenting Brethren, who are really desirous of Goodness, and lovers of Peace, and who embraced that Party meerly for Conscience sake, as taking it to be the better way to secure

cure their Salvation, if they would but divest themselves of those Prejudices, which they have so groundlessly taken against our Church, and would consider with a Spirit of Candor and Charity, the earnest Command of Christ to his Church to live in Peace and Concord, and how their Separation is an evident breach of that Gracious Command, I doubt not but they would find that they are in a very contrary way to obtain their intended purpose: And as they confess that our Church keepeth the Fundamentals of Christianity sufficiently for the Salvation of Men; so they would think it much less dangerous to joyn and unite with us, than to continue in that state of division which is so much contrary to the Spirit of the Gospel. And besides, they might also consider, that those pretended Defects that may be found in our Church, tho' they were real Deficiencies and Imperfections, yet they are not so much destructive of Mens Salvation, as those Breaches of Peace and Unity are, which are kept up, and made still wider and wider by this Separation.

When two Evils cannot be both avoided, a judicious prudent Man, however, will, if he can, escape the worst. Now suppose the Defects and Imperfections of our Church be one Evil, and the breaking the Peace of the Church be another; Is not this last the worst Evil by far of them both? I am sure that the Holy Scriptures contain in them most
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solemn Charges to us, and these very frequently inculcated, to live in Peace and Unity amongst our selves: And there we are as often told, that Divisions and Distractions in the Church are some of the Devil's Works. And what Reformation soever our Brethren can propose to themselves, as the Fruit of their Separation; it is certain that nothing but Evil can rationally be expected to come out of it, as we have seen from thence nothing else till now. But they can no where in the Scripture find, that a set Form of Prayers, or Crossing of Children in their Baptism, or Kneeling at the Sacrament, or any other Practices of our Church, which are disliked by them, are there forbidden, or that they are the Works of the Devil.

Lastly, They might consider, that *Truth and Peace* are the two chief Characters of the Christian Church, and these two excellent Vertues are represented to us in Scripture as *kissing one another*; to let us know they can never abide asunder. Where is no Truth, there is no Peace; and where is no Peace, there is no Truth. And if we have the Truth in our Church, as our Brethren will not deny it; Why should they not maintain also the Peace of the Church, which is so essential to its Constitution, or so necessary to its very Being.

It methinks such Considerations as these, should make all well-minded and conscientious Persons wishers, and desirous to be the

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Members of a Church that is in possession of these two Vertues, *Truth and Peace*, without any controll. Hardly any Dissenter will deny that the pure Truth of the Gospel is taught in the Church of *England*; and she is so much the Assertor of Peace and Unity, that she openeth her Arms to all Christians, and is ready to admit to her Communion, any Persons that are willing to come to her on Terms of Love and Christian Charity.

But our Dissenting Brethren object against this, and say, That they are willing enough to come to the Church, provided she would grant them such Terms of Communion as they may approve of; but as to those that are now in Force, they declare that they cannot in Conscience submit to them.

In the Examination of their chief Objections, I shall have more Occasion to speak in particular of those Terms of Communion, which they declare they cannot submit to in Conscience. Now I will make some general Observations upon this Objection.

First, Is there any Reason and Justice that Inferiours should give Law to their Superiours, or Children to their Parents, or some particular Members of the Church to the whole Church? If it be their Duty to live in Peace and Unity with the Church, they must acknowledge their Separation to be an Infraction of their Duty; therefore they must own their Fault, and as the Prodigal Son,

Son, cry out for Mercy, acknowledging that they have sinned against God and their Mother the Church: But if, instead of this humble and dutiful Behaviour, they discover an haughty Temper, by demanding their own Terms and Conditions; this shows that they pretend still to be in the right, that they have done no offence, and are guilty of no fault; but it's their Mother the Church which is in the wrong, she hath done all the Mischiefs, and she, forsooth, must make an humble Confession of her Fault, acknowledging that she hath provoked her good Children to run away from her, by using them too hard; and now if she has a mind to receive them again in her Lap, she must stoop to their Will and Pleasure; otherwise there shall be no Peace nor Reconciliation. Now I ask any unprejudiced and considerate Person, whether such Proposals as these have the least Grain of Justice and Reason? And whether it be possible, that those who make them, can have any real design of Peace? I confess, if they had been hardly dealt with by the Church, if new and unreasonable Impositions had been laid upon them, then they might require some Abate-ments of the Churches Right, and demand the Abrogation of those new Terms: But it is certain, that in reference to the Laity, there are no such new hardships imposed. The Act of *Uniformity* was made at the time of the Reformation, and if there were any al-

alterations made in Queen *Elizabeth's*, King *James*, and King *Charles* the First's times, those alterations were rather favourable to the Dissenters than otherwise: And therefore the old Puritans did not Separate from the Church, though they did not approve of all the particulars of her Worship and Government. Since that time the Church hath done nothing to force them out, and they might continue in their Duty as well as their forefathers did. Wherefore, if they have a real mind to be reconciled to the Church, and to live in peace and amity with her, it is but just and reasonable that they should make the first steps towards it, and accept of the Conditions and Terms that are now in being, till they may have a favourable occasion to have those things altered which they think want some Reformation.

2. Our dissenting Brethren should consider that there is a great difference to be made between their Ministers and their Lay people: I grant there are some Subscriptions, Assent and Consent, and some Oaths required from those that will be in Orders and qualify themselves for any Pastoral office, which, I will suppose, may be contrary to the Consciences of several of the Non-conformist Ministers; and those that have received Order from their Presbytery, will hardly comply to take a Re-ordination from the Bishops: Though I will say this by the by, they might no more scruple to be Re-ordained by Bishops, for the

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sake of the Church's peace, than the *French* Refugees did, who, though they were as well, at least, admitted into the Ministerial Office as our Non-conformist Ministers, yet did not scruple to take a Re-ordination here in *England*, from the Bishops, when an occasion was offered to them of some Pastoral Office in our Church. I am sorry to see that Mr *Calamy*, in his *Defence of Moderate Non-conformity*, doth so much misrepresent the business of Re-ordination, as if it were a very unjust imposition, importing a full declaration of him that is Re-ordained, that he had no Orders before; which I think to be a very wrong notion, both of the word *Re-ordination*, and of the thing it self.

First, Of the word; For whosoever saith that a Minister hath been Re-ordained, supposeth that he was in Orders before; otherwise why should the particle *re*, which signifieth *again*, be put before the word Ordination?

Secondly, Of the thing it self; For I cannot see how a Re-ordination supposeth a declaration that a Minister was not before in Orders. It may suppose that he had not his Orders from a Bishop according to the Constitution of the Church of *England*; that supposition is true; but there is neither express nor tacite declaration that he was not a Minister before: On the Contrary, it is supposed that he was a Minister, but not a Minister qualified for the Church of *England*. And therefore the *French Refugees*, who are amongst us, and may

may have a Conscience as tender as Mr. *Cum-
my* and other Non-conformist Ministers,
have been very ready to take new Orders
from the Bishops: Not because they did not
think themselves lawful Ministers before;
but because they were not qualified for the
Ministry of the Church of *England* according
to her Constitution and Government. I do
not pretend to enter into that Controversy,
which of the two agreeth best with the Aposto-
lical age, the Ordination by Bishops, or by
Presbytery: Though I may say, that as soon
as there was a distinction made in the Church
between Bishops and Presbyters (which our
Brethren cannot deny to have been in the se-
cond Century) the Ordinations have been per-
formed primarily by Bishops, and ever since
that time, the whole Christian Church (ex-
cept some late reformed Churches abroad)
have observed that Ecclesiastical rule and
practice; and the same the Church of *England*
observeth: So that whosoever pretends to be
admitted into the Ministerial Office in the
Church of *England*, is obliged to submit to
this Ecclesiastical Constitution, and he can-
not be dispensed without an infraction of the
Ecclesiastical Law. *Mr. C.* thinks it is very hard, that a
Man who believeth himself to be a lawful
Minister, should begin again by the Orders
of Deacons, he doth not like this going back:
But I suppose if there were no other Cause of
their Separation, but that, he and his Brethren
might expect from our Bishops the same fa-

word, which they granted to the French Ministers, which was to give them the Orders of Priest and Deacon at the same time: and I heartily wish that this business of Re-ordination, which so much troubles Mr. Calamy, as it appeareth in his Defence, &c. were the only cause of their separation: Were it so, I might hope that for the sake of Peace our Superiors would dispense with a necessity of their Re-ordination; provided the Church might be secured from other troubles and confusions. I am sorry Mr. Calamy layeth such charges of hardness and uncharitableness upon the Church of England even to strangers: But in particular he is pleased to put this question to Mr. Hoadly. *Is it a Defence of our fair treatment of foreign Protestants, who have fled their own Country for their Religion, and taken shelter among us, to force them to submit to Reordination; and in effect, to renounce their Orders, before they shall partake of our Charity?* And hath not this been the course taken with the French Refugees? Mr. Calamy is here in a great mistake; I hope it is not a willful one: But it is to be wondered how he hath been imposed so easily upon; for he liveth in London, where he might have been soon undeceived: There is no French Ministers there but would have told him, that the Government alloweth Three thousand Pounds every year for the maintenance of the poor French Ministers, which Sum is distributed to them without

any regard to their Re-ordination: And actually at this very day, those that never were Re-ordained have their share in the Charity of the Nation, as well, and as much as the others. So that it is not true that they are forced to submit to Re-ordination, before they shall partake of our Charity. 'Tis another untruth, to say, of those that are Reordained, that they were forced to it: And another besides, to say, that they are forced in effect to renounce their Orders.

I hope my Readers will forgive me this Digression from my present Subject: I do it to undeceive Mr. Calamy and his Friends, and to justify the Church of England, which hath shewed a tender Heart, and a compassionate Behaviour towards the French Refugees, without any hardship put upon them; but on the contrary, their distressed condition was, and is still, made as easie to them as it is possible. I confess, there was at first an order, that all the French Refugees should receive the Sacrament according to the Custom of the Church of England, to be qualified to receive the Publick Charity, whether it is that which Mr. Calamy is pleased to call Re-ordination, I know not: However, this was not an order of the Church of England, but of King James; and it was not of any long standing; for his Declaration of a General Toleration came out soon after, which put an end to this order. So much for this digression.

Now I come again to my Subject; I cannot blame the Dissenting Ministers for re-

fusing to submit to a Re-ordination, and to all the Impositions and Subscriptions, Assent and Consent, and other Qualifications, which they think they cannot submit to in Conscience. When Approbation, Assent and Consent with an Oath are required, a Man must be careful what he doth, lest he fall into the Sins of Perjury and Hypocrisie. But, Pray, what need, what pressing necessity is there, that our tender conscientious Brethren should take upon themselves any Pastoral Office, since they cannot be admitted to it but upon such terms as are against their Conscience? And were it not much better that they should forbear their Publick Functions, than to let their People continue in that unlawful Separation? Were it not much more expedient, I will not say, *that one should Perish, rather than a whole Nation* (God be Thanked there is no Danger of their Ruine) but that a few Persons should be content to live in a Private Condition, rather than to cause such disturbances in the Nation? And if they think it shou'd be hard for them, to be deprived of those Liberties to do good, and to edifie Men by their Preaching the Gospel: I ask, whether, on the contrary, it would not be very Glorious for them to do so much for the Peace of the Church? And whether the publick, might not receive much more advantage from their silence, than from their Preaching? Considering besides, that they might be much
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more useful another way in their private stations.

I confess, if the Church of *England* were an Heretical Church, if the Gospel of Christ were perverted and corrupted among us, or that the Nation of *England* were either a Jewish, or Pagan, or Papist Nation; then our Dissenting Brethren might, with as good reason as St. Paul, say, *Who be unto us if we Preach not the Gospel of Christ.* But they own that the Ministers of the Church of *England*, Preach the same Gospel which they Preach: Therefore for the sake of the same Gospel, which is the Gospel of Peace; for the sake of their own Nation, which cannot be maintain'd in Peace as long as their separation stands; and for the sake of our Common Lord and Master, even Jesus Christ, who gave such an earnest and solemn charge to his Church, to Live in Peace and Unity; for all these great and weighty reasons they might hold their peace and be silent.

So far I have answered the objection in reference to the Dissenting Ministers: Now I shall answer it in reference to their People.

3. I say, as to the Lay People, they have no reason at all to demand any other terms from the Church, that they might safely Communicate with us, than those which are already established: For there is nothing required of the People, but only their presence and attendance, with Piety, Zeal, and Devotion, in all the parts of the Divine Service,

in the Prayers, the Reading and Expounding of the Word of God : Except any shall scruple at kneeling at the Sacrament, of which I shall have occasion to speak hereafter, as well as of crossing of Children in their Baptism, and of requiring God-fathers and God-mothers. Now suppose that they find fault with some parts of our Divine Service; their presence at those supposed defective and faulty parcels doth not import their consent and approbation of them : Nor is there any occasion, much less any necessity, that they should say *Amen* to them. As long as they own that our Liturgy is good in general, and that Christians may receive a great improvement from it, and that their Service, when duly performed, may be acceptable to God, they should not withdraw themselves from those Blessings and Comforts, under that weak pretence, that they cannot approve of, and consent to some parcels of our Liturgy ; the Church doth not require such a consent to what they dislike, they may tolerate them, yet not approve of them : Such an Approbation would be an act of their Will against Conscience, which is Sinful ; But a meer toleration of those things importeth no Sin ; especially if they consider, that this toleration, which is required from them, is for the Peace of the Church, which cannot be maintained otherwise.

Let our Brethren take this matter in its worst state and circumstances, and suppose, if they please, that those few parcels

cels of our Divine Service are Sinful : As long as they come not purposely to Church to hear them, and joyn in them, they are free from their sinfulness ; they have nothing to do with them, and cannot be infected by them. If they say that this is against the rules of good Morals ; and that they have been told other things ; as that going into lewd company, and hearing of filthy discourses is sinful, tho' they themselves disapprove those lewd and filthy Conversations : I reply, If I go into the company of Merry Fellows without any necessity, and that I am sure, when I am there, I shall hear nothing but Prophane and Idle Discourses, I commit a Sin ; because having no other business there, I do in a manner approve of that way of Conversation, since I go thither for no other end. But if I cannot avoid, upon an urgent necessity, to be sometimes present in those Prophane Conversations, my presence there is not sinful ; except I give my approbation to them. In the same manner our Dissenting Brethren, on whom there is an urgent necessity of coming to Church, to avoid the Sin of Schism, should not forbear the doing of it, tho' there were some parcels in the Liturgy, which they think to be Sinful : They are no more Guilty of that Sinfulness in the hearing of them, than I am guilty in hearing a Wicked Man Swear and Curse, when I cannot help it. If all the rest of the Liturgy be esteemed good and lawful by them,

them, and proper and sufficient to promote their Piety and Devotion, that's enough; they must tolerate what they dislike, rather than break the Peace of the Church.

But they say, *It looketh scandalous to do so, and we can serve God better in another way*: I shall not enter into the examination of that Word *Scandal*, which is little understood by most part of them that use it; I refer my Readers to the excellent Treatise of Dr. Hammond on that subject. But I say this, Let their Communion with us look as scandalous as they please, as long as it is not sinful, it is enough; and not only it is not sinful, but it is necessary, and consequently it cannot be scandalous in the right sense of the word. But I think (and it has been abundantly prov'd) that their separation from the Church is much more scandalous, than that simple toleration which is demanded of them. *But we can serve God better in another Way*; I deny that, as long as they continue in the state of a Sinful separation, they cannot serve God better; nor can their Service be acceptable to God, as long as it is not performed in Peace and Charity.

They say again, *How can we forsake our own Pastors, who have done us so much good by their Instructions, and have bestowed their Pains and Labours upon us?* I reply, That these are humane considerations, which ought to give place to those of Religious Duties. If it

It be a Sin to separate from the Church, and if it be their duty to come and hear their Lawful Ministers, these are stronger obligations than a civil Complaisance and Gratitude: Besides they may express their thankfulness to Dissenting Ministers in another way, and return them some just acknowledgments for the good they have received from them.

4. lastly, Our Dissenting Brethren may find a better way to receive satisfaction from our Church, than to demand terms of Communion, before they make any steps towards their Reconciliation: And that is, that they should express an hearty desire of Peace and Unity with the Church, which they cannot do better than by renouncing their separation: And when they are once with us, they may much better succeed in their demands of a Reformation of those things which they dislike. And besides, the reason of their Duty, which obligeth them to it, I have another very considerable to offer unto them; and that is, if they are inclined for the general good of the Church, and do really aim at a further Progress of the Reformation, since they think the Church is in great want of it, they can never succeed better than in joyning with us for that end; and there is now a great prospect that in so doing their Labours might not be in Vain. For, God be thanked, the outward affairs of the Church do not stand upon the same

same Foot they did formerly; there was heretofore a strong Party, who made it their business to oppose the general good of the Church, either as to her Peace and Unity, or her Reformation; and this Party was held up instigated and incensed, by the common Enemy of the Protestant Interest, I mean the Church of *Rome*. Her Emissaries were hard at Work with all their Engines, to keep open, and to widen the Breaches and Divisions of this Church: They blew the fire of those hatreds and animosities that were kindled amongst us; and plaid their game with too much success among both parties, the Church Men, and the Dissenters; and, the Government then favouring those Practises, it was almost impossible to succeed in any design advantageous to the Protestant Cause. Besides, the Civil Wars, which were of a fresher date, kept both Parties at a greater distance; their resentments were too fresh in their Memories to give place so soon to any proposal of Peace and Concord. But those two great Opposers of the general welfare of the Protestant interest are now (by God's Blessing) removed out of our way. The *Papish* interest is now but weak here in *England*, if not quite destroy'd: And let them strive as much as they please, there is no reason to think, as affairs now stand, that the *Papists* shall be able to oppose, with any success, the designs of a general Peace among the Protestants in
England,

England; and of a further Reformation of the Church, if it be thought necessary. As to those old animosities and resentments which the Civil Wars occasioned on both sides, and have kept this Nation in a long and tedious ferment; it is likely that most part of them are now forgotten, the Persons that were most deeply concern'd therein are now dead and gone; and as new Men are come into the management of publick affairs, so in all probability they have entertain'd new Principles to act by; Principles more agreeing to the real interest both of Church and State; being free from those prejudiced Passions, which had for great an influence upon their Predecessors. Besides, we have the Blessing of a most Gracious Queen, whose Heart is as much Protestant as English; and who, without doubt, will not only hearken to all just and lawful proposals for promoting the Peace and Welfare of the Church; but she will even further such a good design with all the Zeal and Vigor imaginable. As to the rest of our Superiors both in Church and State, we have no less reason to think them to be led by the same Spirit of Peace and Unity; and that they aim at the general good of the Church; For it sufficiently appeareth, as to our Ecclesiastical Superiors, that they act altogether with a Spirit of Meekness and Moderation, which they have evidenced in several circumstances. And there is no probability

debility that any of them will refuse their Labours, as well as their Consent, for the giving to the Dissenters all the satisfaction, which may justly and reasonably be demanded (if they themselves be but tractable and willing) in order to a Happy and Glorious Peace and Unity.

Wherefore I think it needless for our Brethren to urge that they are better acquainted with the Church of England's Spirit; that they have tried it before now, and know that she is Stiff and High, and never will consent to any alteration, nor grant so much as a tittle of what they may demand. I say they have no reason to speak so now; because in that respect the Church of England differs much from what she was before, for the reasons abovementioned: I confess formerly she used some severities toward them; but it is known that those practices were chiefly kept up by Popish Factions: And if there remain still some Stiff Members, their Number is inconsiderable in comparison of the others; and I hope they will never be able to obstruct such a good Design, nor shall bear any considerable sway against it.

Besides, if our Dissenting Brethren were so good Christians as to make the first steps towards Peace and Unity; they might reasonably expect that such a condescension would be much regarded by our Church, and their design backt with all the encouragement

regiment imaginable; Yea, who can doubt but that Heaven would favour and prosper such their peaceable overtures. As we will grant that there may be a great many good Christians among them, who are desirous of goodness, and look after Peace and Quietness; so I suppose, our Brethren will not be so Uncharitable as not to grant as much to the Members of our Church: Yea, I may confidently affirm the bath a great many good Members, whose Hearts would leap for joy in seeing their Brethren come again into their Communion. Nay, I cannot imagine how there should be any true Member of the Church, really concern'd for the Glory of God, and lovers of Peace and Goodness, otherwise affected; but they would all give such a wellcome to the coming back of their Straying Brethren, as no tidings of Joy and Gladness could be received with a more general applause.

So far, I think, I have made my second Argument good, and have made it appear, That our Brethren's Separation is a direct opposition to, and a plain destruction of one of the chief ends and purposes of the Gospel, which is to maintain all the Members of the Christian Church in Peace, Unity and Concord; I have also sufficiently answered to their pretended offers of Peace, in showing how unreasonable it is to demand new Terms from the Church, that they may be admitted to her Communion; and in the mean while, I have directed them to a better Method of Reconciliation

conciliation; all which they should heartily wish to follow, if they were really affected with a Sense of their present woful Condition: And to convince them still more and more of it, I will proceed to my Third Argument.

ARGUMENT. III.

Taken from the Practice of our Saviour and his Apostles, and from the whole Christian Church in her purest Ages.

OUR Lord Jesus Christ hath not only delivered his Doctrine to us to be the Rule of our Faith; but also he hath given us his Life to be a Model of ours. Peace and Unity he hath recommended to his Disciples, as one of the chief Points of his Doctrine, and the same Peace he inviolably observed, during the time of his Life on Earth, in holding a strict Communion with the Church of the Jews, and even with the Pharisees in their Divine Worship, tho' they were the worst of his Enemies: And this Church-Communion, which he held himself with the Jews, he did strictly recommend also to his Disciples, and told them, That as long as the Pharisees did sit in the Chair of Moses, they should hear them. From this constant Practice of our Saviour, and his express Command to his Disciples, I draw another Argument to prove the unlawfulness of our Dissenting Brethrens's Separation.

If

If our Saviour thought himself obliged to hold Communion with the established Church of this Nation, which was the Church of the Jews, who were his Brethren according to the Flesh, and to hold Communion with them in their Divine Service; and if he did command his Disciples to live in the same Communion, notwithstanding the false Doctrines, Errors, and Superstitions of that Church; then the Dissenters, who pretended to be Followers and Disciples of Christ, are likewise obliged to hold Communion with the Established Church of their Nation, and join with her in Divine Service: Tho' there were Errors and considerable defects in her Doctrine and Practices. But our Saviour thought himself obliged to hold Communion with the Established Church of his Nation, which was the Church of the Jews, &c. Therefore the Dissenters are obliged to hold Communion with the Established Church of their Nation, &c.

There is nothing, that I know of, which can be objected against our Saviour's Practice and his Command to his Disciples: This is Matter of Fact, recorded in the Holy Scriptures: No Man will deny it who professeth himself to be a Christian.

But, it may be supposed, our Dissenting Brethren will deny the Evidence of my Conclusion; and will not grant that the same Necessity lieth upon them to join with the Established Church of *England*, which Christ

did oblige himself and his Disciples unto, in joyning with the Church of the *Jews*. But I hope I shall make it appear that there is a great Parity in these two Obligations; and even that the Obligation is stronger on the side of the Dissenters. For our Saviour being Lord and Master of the whole Law of *Moses*, and of that Dispensation, he might have altered or abdicated that Church Government, and have had nothing at all to do with it; and no question but he would have done it, if he had thought it unlawful to communicate with a depraved and corrupted Church; and instead of giving charge to his Disciples to hear the Doctors of the Law preach in their Synagogues or Churches, he would have given them expresse Orders to separate from them and their Communion. But he did not: He only gave them a warning against the *Leaven of the Pharisees and their Hypocrisie*, and told them of all their corruptions, and false glosses, and traditions; but still did bid them not to break Communion with them, as long as *they were sitting in the Chair of Moses*; that is, as long as their Church was a true Church; which was to last no longer than till the time was come, that Christ had, as he said himself, fulfilled all Righteousness, that he had done all that was to be performed by him, for the setting up of a new Church and a new Dispensation. And it appeareth plainly enough, that the chief Reasons our Saviour had to live

live in Communion with the Jewish Church, were, To keep the Peace and Unity of the Church, and to avoid those disturbances and confusions which are commonly caused by a Separation.

Against this Parity our Dissenting Brethren may object. That it did peculiarly belong to that Legal Dispensation, as long as it lasted, to keep the outward Unity, and Uniformity in the Divine Service inviolate, much more than it required in the Christian Church: That, by an express order of the Law, there was but one place appointed for the Sacrifices, which were the chief part of their Worship, and that was the Temple of Jerusalem, where none but the Children of Levi could officiate: And it had been a Breach of the Law to set up an Altar in any other place than in that Temple, as the Samaritans did. But the Dispensation of the Gospel is of a larger extent, and the Christian Church, which is spread over all the World, is not confined to one corner, nor to one visible Congregation: The true Worshipers of God can worship him every where, as our Saviour said to the Samaritan Woman.

It is easie to answer this Objection. I grant that the Dispensation of the Gospel is of a larger extent than that of the Law. I confess that Jerusalem was the only place appointed for the Publick Divine Service of the Jews: But I affirm also, that Peace and

Unity are no less required among the Members of the Christian Church, than they were required among the *Jews*; and the disorders and confusions which are the natural consequents of an unnecessary Separation are to be avoided as much in the Christian Church, as they were to be avoided in that of the *Jews*: And tho' the Christian Church may worship God in any part of the World, yet she hath not the Liberty to separate her Members from one another, when they can be united together, not only in Spirit, but also in Body and Uniformity of Worship.

Besides, I desire you to observe this, which is of very great consequence to this Matter; If it had been a Sin to joyn in Communion with a depraved and corrupted Church, as it is asserted by our Dissenting Brethren, then our Saviour would have held no Church Communion with the *Jews*, nor have commanded his Disciples to do the same: For our Saviour would never have committed or commanded any thing that is sinful. If our Brethren oppose, That Christ could not help it, because there was but one place appointed for the Divine Service: I reply, That to say so, is as good as to say, that our Saviour could not help or avoid sinning; which is horrible Blasphemy. If so be it is a Sin to communicate with a corrupted Church; or if there had been the least danger of committing any unlawful act by this Communion, is it probable that our

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Saviour would not have prevented it as soon as he entred into his Ministerial or Mediator-ry Office? Instead of going into the Temple of Jerusalem, or into the Synagogues, he would presently have departed with his Disciples, and have set up his own Church separate from theirs; and would have preached his Gospel, and taught his Disciples any where else.

But our Brethren may object again, That the Messiah was to be revealed first of all to the Jews, and that it was a part of his Mediatorship that he should preach his Gospel to them where-ever they were met together; and the Temple and the Synagogues being the places of their constant meeting, he was obliged to repair to those places. I say to this, That this Reason for Christ's meeting and communicating with the Jews, cannot justify the supposed unlawfulness of the Action, if so be it is a Sin to hold Communion with a corrupted Church. Our Saviour, who had a Divine Power, and was himself the supreme Legislator, could have gathered the People any where else, rather than in those publick places of Worship; and as he did several times teach and preach to the Multitude on the Mountain of Olivet, and on the Sea Shores, so he might have done the same always, if there had been any defilement in joyning with the Jews in their Worship; But not only went he into the Temple of Jerusalem to teach his Doctrine, but also assisted at the Divine

Worship, as a private Jew: And the same he commanded his Disciples to do, not only as Teachers of his Gospel, but as private Jews also; since he did bid them to hear the Doctors of the Law, as long as *they were sitting in the Chair of Moses*. It is most certain, that our Saviour would never, upon any account whatsoever, commit, or countenance any unlawful Act, but forbear every appearance of Sin; neither would he put his Disciples in any danger of it: Wherefore it appeareth plainly, that it is not unlawful; nor is there any danger of Sin in communicating with a corrupted Church, provided we keep our selves free from her corruptions: But on the contrary, by the Practice of our Saviour, it appeareth plainly, that it is sinful to separate from an Established Church, which is a true Church of God, even tho' that Church be corrupted and defiled.

But if our Dissenting Brethren do insist still upon a disparity of the Christian Church from the Legal Dispensation, or the Jewish Church; tho' I have made it appear how ill-grounded this disparity is in that respect, and what good Reason I have to conclude against their Separation, from the Practice of our Saviour: Yet to enforce more and more this my Argument, I will give them Examples from the Christian Church it self, even of a Divine Authority, since they shall be taken from the constant Practice of the Apostles,

I say,

I say, That the Apostles did not forbear to communicate with those Churches which were defiled and corrupted; nor did they command the Faithful to separate from them, which they would have done, if a Separation from those Churches had been lawful; or rather, if there had been any Sin in communicating with them: The Church of *Corinth* was corrupted, St. Paul rebuketh the Members thereof for their irreverent Behaviour, their scandalous and almost prophane coming to the Lords Table; he doth reprove them for these and other Misdemeanors: But yet he no where commandeth the best of that Church to separate from others upon those Accounts: On the contrary, he rebuketh them for their Divisions and Separations; one saying he was a Disciple of *Paul*, another of *Cephas*, another of *Apollus*. The Apostle proveth the Unity of the Church, and the Danger of separating, in telling them that those different Persons are the Ministers of the same Christ, Teachers of the same Doctrine, and Doctors of the same Church: And that all the Members of the Church must be united, and in an Agreement, together, as the Members of the same Body: And he useth to the same purpose, the comparison of the Body of a Man, whose Members are knit and joyned together, and from thence he concludeth, that they must avoid all Strifes and Contentions, and live in Unity and Peace under the same

Head, which is Christ. The Church of Rome, in that time, was so weak and feeble in the Duties of Government, as that they did not, or could not separate from them, or discard such as preached *Christ contentiously and with spiteful Minds* against the Apostle; and the greater Number of that Church did corruptly demean and carry themselves therein; And yet the Apostle never taught the rest to separate and hold no Communion with them in the Ordinances of Worship. The *Galatians* had so far adulterated the Gospel of Christ, that St. Paul telleth them they were removed to another Gospel, pronounceth that they were bewitched; and if they still persisted to joyn Circumcision and the works of the Law, they were fallen from Grace, and Christ could profit them nothing. And yet they are by him called the Churches of *Galatia*; and no command to any other Church to forsake their Communion. In the Revelations of St. John, you may see that the Church of *Ephesus* was extremely decay'd in her first Love: She was not only cooled a little, but had lost it. In *Pergamus* there were some that held the Doctrine of *Balaam* and of the *Nicolaitans*: In *Thyatira* the Woman *Jezebel* was suffered to teach and seduce the Servants of Christ. Of *Sardis*, the Holy Ghost saith, she had a Name to live, but she was Dead; her works were not perfect before God; there were but few therein who had not defiled their Garments. Of *Laodicea* it is

recorded, that she was neither hot nor cold, and then it is not hard to conceive how she was overgrown with disorders. All those Churches were become very defective and corrupted, and yet Christ was present with them by his Grace, and we see no where any command to forsake them and separate from their Communion.

Besides, whoever is acquainted with the Church History, cannot be ignorant, that the Sin of Schism is charged upon all those, who, upon the account of pretended false Doctrines, or corrupt Practices, would break the Communion of the Church, and separate from her. This is out of the Province of those Persons, for whom I chiefly intend these Papers; otherwise I could bring several Instances of such Separatists, who were condemned as Schismatics in the Councils of the Church. I will mention only the *Donatists*, who began a Schism in the beginning of the fourth Century, which caused great Mischiefs and Confusions in the Church. This Schism was occasioned by a pretence, true or false, that a Bishop, with some other Persons had delivered the Sacred Books with the consecrated Vessels of the Church into the Hands of Heathens; for which reason the *Donatists* would hold no Communion with the Catholick Church, but they lived in a separate way, and ordained Bishops and Priests of their own Faction. This Schism intested the Church a long time,

but

but it was condemned in the Council of *Arles*. *St. Austin* wrote against them with much Passion, and in his Writings makes appear the ill consequences of such Church-Separations. There were several others in the Church, who were all treated as Schismatics, and condemned for such by the Catholick Church.

Now, I hope, it appears sufficiently, that our Dissenting Brethren have against them, the Practice of our Saviour, of his Apostles, and of the whole Christian Church, in her first and purest Ages; which proveth plainly the unlawfulness of their Separation from the Church of *England*; tho' it were granted that she hath several defects and corruptions.

But I foresee an Objection which may be brought against all that I have said upon this Argument, which I think necessary to be answered before I part with it. The Objection is this. *If my Argument be good, and the Consequence true, then it is never lawful to separate from a Church, tho' never so corrupt and heretical: And therefore the Protestants Separation from the Church of Rome, which was the only Established Christian Church in this West part of the World before the Reformation, is an unlawful Schismatical Separation. My Argument, may they say, proveth as much, or proveth nothing at all.*

This Objection, how considerable soever it seemeth at first, yet it may be easie, and
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In few words, answered. If the Church of *Rome* had kept the Fundamentals of Christianity pure and intire, if she had not subverted the Faith in Christ, and destroyed and polluted the Service of the Church, by filling it up with superstitious and idolatrous Worships; if she had not imposed upon her Members, a necessity of adoring the Creature instead of the Creator, nor enjoined them to serve Angels and departed Saints; in a Word, if she had not deprived her People of their Hopes and Means of Salvation; I say, if she had not done so much, then I grant that all the Churches that separated from her, were guilty of Schism: But I hope our Brethren are well enough satisfied, that the Church of *Rome* hath done all these wretched Acts: Therefore a Separation from her was both just and necessary.

Now what we say of the Church of *Rome*, cannot be said with Justice and Reason of the Church of the *Jews*, in that time when our Saviour communicated with her: For tho' she was corrupted and defiled to a high degree, yet *Salvation was still of the Jews*, and the Chair of *Moses* stood still among them. But the Chair of Christ is no more standing in the Church of *Rome*, but the Chair of Antichrist. And tho' there were several false Doctrines, Traditions, and false Glosses amongst the *Jews*, yet there was no idolatrous Worship imposed and made a Term of their Communion, as is done among the

Papists: Therefore, tho' a Separation from the Church of *Rome* was absolutely necessary, yet it was not necessary from that of the *Jews*, when our Saviour held Communion with her. As to the Christian Churches reproved by our Saviour in the Book of Revelations, and the Churches of *Corinth* and *Rome*, and *Galatia*, censured by St. Paul; I say as much of those Churches, that the Fundamentals of Christianity were kept among them, Idols were not worshiped there, neither Angels nor Spirits served and adored: And tho' there was Corruption either in their Doctrines or Worship, or Morals; yet the way to Salvation was not obstructed, the Spirit of Grace did abide with them, and God owned them for his People; and therefore, there was no need of a Separation from them. Let our Separatists compare our Church, if they please, with that of the *Jews*, or with those of *Corinth*, of *Ephesus*, of *Galatia*, of *Pergamus*, of *Thyatira*, of *Sardis*, of *Laodicea* (tho' I hope they cannot believe the Church of *England* to be so much corrupted as some of them were,) yet they shall not be able, by such a Comparison, to prove the Lawfulness of their Separation; except they think and can prove our Church to be as bad as the Church of *Rome*.

But then they will say again, *How then shall we know that the Corruptions of a Church are great and sufficient enough to make a Separation lawful and necessary?*

I reply, That this may easily be known. That Church which destroyeth the Foundations of your Faith, and the Hopes of your Salvation; That Church which forceth you to worship Idols and Creatures, instead of the Living God; That Church which forceth the Spirit of Grace, Blessing and Comfort, to retire from her; in a Word, That Church which shutteth People out of Heaven, is a Church which God Almighty hath forsaken, and therefore she must be likewise forsaken, by all Persons that pretend to Salvation.

Now I have done with this Argument, I Pray God Almighty it may have its intended Effects on the Hearts of our Brethren; and that they may no more pretend to be wiser than our Saviour and his Apostles, and the whole Christian Church in her former and best Ages.

I have one Argument more to offer to their most serious Consideration; which, methinks, should be of some force with them; since it is taken from the Opinion and constant Practice of some of their best Friends.

ARGUMENT IV.

Taken from the Opinion and constant Practice of the Old Non-Conformists of England.

I Cannot imagine the Reason why the Dissenters from the Church of England, at this present time, should dislike the Opinion

on and Practice of their Old Brethren, or pretend to a better understanding of those Matters of Religion, which occasion so much trouble and divisions in the Church: For it is very certain that the most Eminent among the Old Non-conformists did maintain and assert a Separation from the Church of *England* to be Sinful and Schismatical, as I intend to make it appear in this Argument out of their own Authors.

But before I go any further upon this Point, I will give this short Advertisement. If any Body find fault with me for the doing of this, and say, that it is altogether needless; since it hath been done already by other Men, and the Dissenters are acquainted enough with the Books of the Old Non-conformists: I have this to say for my self. That I writ not to the Learned who are acquainted with Books, I pretend not to give them more light than what they have already; and I suppose they have not lived till now, without examining those Matters which have been handled by Eminent Divines on both sides; what I may, and heartily do, in their behalf, is to pray God Almighty, that he would be pleased to touch their Hearts, and open their Eyes, that they might be sensible of their real Interest, and of the danger they put their own Souls into, and the Souls of them which they so unhappily precipitate into the Sin of an unlawful Separation.

I say therefore, that this work is not intended for them, but for the common sort of
 Peo-

people, who are not so well acquainted with Books, especially Books of any considerable bigness; and other employments requiring their time in another way, which may yet give them leave to read these few sheets, but not many more.

Wherefore in behalf of such persons, I will set down here some of the Arguments of the Old Non-conformists against a Separation from the Church of *England*. But I desire that you or any other persons, which may read these Papers, will not think that I have a mind to impose upon their Credulity, or upon that of any other. I am a lover of Truth as well as of Peace; and as I propose to my self the Peace of the Church, so I will produce nothing in reference to these Citations out of the Old Non-conformists, but what I can direct you to the proof, in mentioning the Books, and sometimes the pages where you may read them.

Mr. Dod on the Commandments, perswaddeth people to come to Church at the beginning of the publick Prayers of the Liturgy; and not the husband come when the Prayers are half done, and the wife when the Prayers are quite ended. And he advised his own Daughter to take the Sacrament Kneeling; as may be seen in the Epistle to Bishop Mortons Book of Episcopacy, written by Sir Henry Ilverton.

Mr, Perkins, in his Exposition upon the Epistle of Jude, hath this passage: 'If (saith he) the Church err in matters of Religion, then

Then must we consider whether the Error be
 in a more weighty and Substantial Point,
 or in matter of less Importance. If it be
 in smaller points (the foundation being
 kept) we may not separate ourselves. If
 it be in substance of Doctrine, or in the
 Foundation, then we must consider whe-
 ther it err of humane frailty, or of obstina-
 cy; if of frailty, we may not separate. The
 Church of *Galatia* was through frailty quick-
 ly turned to another Gospel, and erred in
 the foundation, holding Justification by
 Works; yet *Paul* writeth unto it as unto a
 Church of God. So likewise the Church of
Corinth erred grievously, and overthrew the
 Article of the Resurrection; and yet *Paul*
 behaved himself accordingly to it. But if
 the Church err in the substance of Religion
 obstinately, then with a good Conscience
 Separation may be made. Whence we see
 (as he afterwards concludes) that no Man
 may with a good Conscience separate from
 the Church of *England*; seeing it teacheth,
 believeth, and obeyeth the Doctrine of the
 Prophets and Apostles.

Mr. *Burroughs* speaketh thus in his *Irenic* ch.
 2. Men must not separate from a Church,
 though there be corruptions in it, to gather
 into a new Church, which may be more
 pure, and in some respects more comforta-
 ble; First, because we never find the Saints
 in Scripture separating or raising Churches
 in such a Case: and Secondly, there would
 be

‘ this prudent Maxim, The general Peace of
‘ the Church should be more regarded than
‘ some Comfortable accomodations to our
‘ selves.

Thus the Ministers of New-England, also
Non-conformists. To Seperate
from a Church for some evil only
Conceived, or indeed in the Church,
which might and should be tolerated
and healed with a spirit of meekness, and of which
the Church is not yet convinc’d, though perhaps
himself be; for this and the like reasons to with-
draw from publick Communion, is unlawful and
sinful.

Platform of
discipline, chr.
13. § 5.

Several other Non-conformists explain them-
selves in this matter thus; We ac-
knowledge the Church of England
to be a true Church of Christ, and
that we are Members of the same
visible Church with them.

Non-confor-
mists no
Schismaticks,
p. 13

This is done by the Old Non-conformists
in their Confutation of the Brow-
nists; who thus begin. That
the Church of England is a true
Church of Christ, and such an one
as from which, whosoever wittingly and willingly
separateth himself, cutteth himself off from Christ;
we doubt not but the Indifferent Reader may be
persuaded by these Reasons following:

A grave and
sober Confut.
p. 1. § 6. p. 57

1. ‘ We enjoy and joyn together in the
‘ use of those outward means which God hath
‘ ordained in his Word for the gathering of a

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‘ visible

‘visible Church, and have been effectual ‘to
 ‘the unfeigned Conversion of many ; as may
 ‘appear both by the other fruits of Faith, and
 ‘by the Martyrdoms which sundry have endu-
 ‘red that were Members of our Church.

2. ‘Our whole Church maketh profession
 ‘of the true Faith : The Confession of our
 ‘Church, together with the Apology there-
 ‘of, and those Articles of Religion, which
 ‘were agreed upon in the Convocation-house,
 ‘Anno 1562. (whereunto every Minister of
 ‘the Land is bound to subscribe) so far forth
 ‘as they contain the Confession of Faith ; and
 ‘the Doctrine of the Sacraments, do prove
 ‘this evidently, &c.

Mr. Bradshaw saith, I affirm that the Mi-
 nistry of our Church Assemblies
 (howsoever it may in some particu-
 lar parts of the Execution happily
 be defective in some places) is for
 the substance thereof, that very same
 Ministry which Christ hath set in his Church.
 This he speaketh, as he saith, of those that do
 subscribe and conform according to the Law of the
 State.

Mr. Hilderham, in his Printed Paper about
 Communion with the Church of England, writ-
 ten to a Gentlewoman, who was sent to Pri-
 son because she would not go to Church, he
 tells her,

‘That a private Christian may dislike the
 ‘corruptions that are in a Church, and may
 pray

Unreasona-
 bleness of
 Separation, p.
 16.

pray and use all lawful means towards a reformation; but he ought not to account all the Churches in a Nation as Heathens and Publicans, that is, such as with whom they may not lawfully Communicate and joyn in the publick service of God.

And Mr. Cotton, in his Epistle to Mr. Hilderham's Lecters upon John, particularly mentions that Letter, and saith,

It hath so strongly and clearly convinced the iniquity of that way of Separation, that I could not (saith he) but acknowledge in it, both the Wisdom of God, and the weakness of the Separatists Arguments, who, endeavouring to answer it, hath given himself and his Cause such a dreadful wound in open view, as neither himself nor all his associates can be able to heal.

Mr. Wilson of Boston could tell his Hearers; That the cause, why God had brought such dreadful calamities upon that Countrey in New England, was Choralism and Separation.

Mr. Ashboleserv'd, that if men deny to hold Communion with such a Church as the Church of England, there hath not been a Church in the world this Thousand years with which a Man might lawfully Communicate.

Mr. Hudson, in his Vindication of the Essence and Unity of the Catholick Church, greatly laments Separation from the publick Assemblies; and condemns those who call their own Mo-

ther, Whore by naming our Church *Babylon, Egypt, Rome, &c* that they may scum the Cream of our Assemblies. *Division*, saith he, *is the Devils Musick; that which makes him Laugh should make us Weep.*

In his Sermon Preached at *ps-wich* at the Election of Parliament, May 1660.

Mr. Ben. Bruning saith, ' Shall Men chop off the Head of Religion it self, only because they find a bauble upon its sleeve? ' Nothing can justifie Separation from the Church, but that Church's Apostacy into downright Idolatry, or some damnable Heresie; ' By all that I can learn from my Bible, we can be assured of nothing else: For Persons willingly to Separate and refuse Communion with a Church, so long as God vouchsafes Communion; How can this be justified, or how will it be answered? I know not. Those words, *Come out from among them, and be ye Separate*, 2. Cor. 6. 17. have been much abused for the Encouragement of Separation from publick Assemblies of *England*: For who is it, but such as are forlornly void of all Christian Charity, that dare say, concerning the Hundred Years past, that the Assemblies of the Church of *England* have had nothing of the Lord's Gracious Presence with them? Or that the Ordinances have been empty things? He that affirms this, bears false witness against Thousands of Glorified Saints in Heaven, and Gra-

cious

cious Souls on Earth, who have found, to their
 Everlasting Comfort, the Presence of God
 in his Ordinances amongst us. Suppose there
 are miscarriages in the management of God's
 Worships and Ordinances among us, yet
 if they be not such as drive God away, I
 see no reason to drive us away: If the Lord
 have ever intended to send any going whilst
 he afforded his own presence, (*come*) *from*
among them, would be improper Language
 in such a case, it must have been (*go*) *from*
among them, not *come*. Suppose our Lot be
 Cast in a Church that hath Corruptions and
 Miscarriages, whilst it holds the Substan-
 tials of true Doctrine and Worship, do any
 body think in this case they cannot hold
 Communion with such a Church without
 being accessory to its Miscarriages and in-
 curring the guilt of its Corruptions? I must
 Profess, I am clearly of another Opinion and
 Judgment, and am confirmed in it from the
 practices of our Lord and Master, who was a
 Member of the *Jewish Church* whilst it was
 Corrupt in Doctrine, Worship and Con-
 versation. 'Tis true, he was free from own-
 ing its Corruptions, he lamented and re-
 proved them, and laboured a redress, but still
 held Communion with it as a Member of it;
 he sharply reproves the *seven Churches* for
 what was amiss, and severely threatens them,
 if they mend not: But all this while there
 is not the least blame laid upon any Member

of those Churches, for notwithstanding or suspending their Communion, &c.

If any Body desires to see more of this Mr. *Burning*, he may be satisfied in one of the Cases of the London Divines, Intituled, *A Resolution of this Case, whether it be Lawful to Separate from the Publick Worship of God, in the Parochial Assemblies of England*: I have extracted this, and all the other Citations mentioned out of the said Case, and out of another which hath this Title, *The Case of Lay-Communion with the Church of England, &c.* In those two Cases the Reader may see a great many more Old Non-conformists Testimonies and Authorities upon this matter; all proving the unlawfulness of a Separation from the Church of *England*.

I do think, when I have transcribed some places out of Mr. *Balls* Book, which I have by me, it may be enough for my present purpose: This Mr. *Ball* was himself a Non-conformist Minister, who hath written purposely to prove the Unlawfulness of a Separation from the Church of *England*. The Title of the Book is, *A Friendly Trial of the Grounds tending to Separation*: His chief design is to prove the Lawfulness of a set Form of Prayers and Liturgy; and that the People may Lawfully be present at those Prayers, which are put up to God in a stinted form of Words, tho in some things the Book may be faulty both for form and matter: He speaks thus in the 9th ch. p. 158.

! There-

Therefore I lay down this proposition, That
 a Christian may Lawfully, and with good
 Conscience, be present at such Service and
 Prayers which are Read out of a Book, tho
 some things therein may be supposed to be
 faulty for Form or Matter, in things not
 Fundamental nor Bordering thereupon, not
 pernicious or obnoxious; but such as may
 be Tolerated among Brethren, and these
 not dispersed through the whole Body of
 the Book, but in some passages only. It is
 one thing to allow Corruption, another to
 be present at the Service of God where
 something is done Corruptly: For the
 Lord chargeth us to keep our selves from
 pollution; but alloweth not to separate from
 abuses, unless he be pleased to go before,
 and as he goeth before us. It is one thing to
 approve of abuses in a Liturgy, another
 to tolerate what we cannot Reform: For a
 Liturgy should be framed so, not that things
 may be construed well, but that they cannot
 be construed amiss; but many things may be
 suffered, which are not so well Ordained,
 when it is not in our power to redress them;
 the Lord needeth not Man's Lie, neither
 doth he allow us to do evil, that good may
 come thereof; and therefore, I say, I must
 not subscribe to an Error against Consci-
 ence, tho never so innocent; nor profess
 approbation of that which in Conscience I
 cannot allow, tho never so small, to the
 intent I might enjoy External Communion

with the Church of God in the Ordinances of
 Worship: But I must tolerate many things
 for the maintenance of Peace and Unity,
 and the preservation of God's Worship:
 For if there be not mutual toleration and for-
 bearance, but each Man will rigidly stand
 upon his own Opinion, and press others to be
 of his mind, and follow his practice in all
 things, and every tittle; of necessity all
 things must fall into Confusion, and the
 Church be Rent almost into as many Pieces as
 there be Men.

This is Mr. *Ball's* proposition, which he
 proveth more at large by several Arguments
 Solid and Rational: I will mention only one
 of them, that you may see the better how
 much he was an Enemy to Separation.

P. 180. 'No particular Member of a Church
 may Voluntarily break off Eternal Commu-
 nion with the Church, or refuse to Communi-
 cate in the Publik Worship of God, unless the
 Lord Jesus go before him therein, and be
 his Warrant; that is, unless Christ hath
 withdrawn the presence of his Grace, or
 the party cannot be present without the
 Guilt of Hypocrisie or Approbation of
 somewhat that is Evil. For the Members
 of the visible Church must hold Fellowship
 in Faith and Love, not only with one ano-
 ther, but with all other Visible Churches, so
 far as they hold Communion with Jesus
 Christ; and therefore no Member can Law-
 fully break off External Communion with the
 true

true Church of Christ, but in that only
 wherein, and so far as it hath broken off
 Fellowship with Christ. — But in a Congre-
 gation where a stinted Form is used, and
 that in some respects faulty here or there,
 Christ may be and is present in the midst
 among them; Christians are called to come,
 and may be present without being Guilty
 of Hypocrisie or Approbation of the least
 Evil. To leave Communion, when we be
 obliged to continue in it, is no less than
 Schism according to the notion of it. — Tho
 Errors or Corruptions of some kind be
 not only Tolerated, but Established, Main-
 tained and Pressed, yet if we can hold Com-
 munion without Approbation of the same
 Errors or Corruptions, Separation in
 that case is unjust, rash, and unadvised;
 because the Lord therein doth not go be-
 fore us. The sin of Separation is unjust,
 is so great and hainous, the ill consequences
 and mischiefs so many and fearful, that all
 Christians should be well advised, neither
 to lay Stumbling-blocks before the Feet of
 others, which might occasion their turning
 aside, nor to seek or catch occasions of depar-
 ture, but rather to wait and tarry till they
 be assured that the Lord goeth before them.

And that you may not think that this
 Man did not disapprove in particuler a Se-
 paration from the Church of *England*, see
 what he saith in the same Chapter concerning
 our Liturgy, p. 175. “ In the second Primi-
 tive

‘tive Church (as some distinguish) if not
 ‘the first, they had a stinted Form of Litur-
 ‘gy; not only for Lessons, Epistles, and
 ‘Gospels, and Professions of Faith, but in
 ‘Prayers, for matter and mannner, not much
 ‘unlike to ours. To the Praise of God, saith
 ‘he, be it spoken, our Liturgy for purity and
 ‘soundness, may compare with any Liturgy
 ‘used in the third and fourth Ages of the
 ‘Church; and if in those times the faithful
 ‘might Lawfully hold Communion in the
 ‘Ordinances of Worship, we cannot at this
 ‘Day Lawfully withdraw our selves by rea-
 ‘son of such faults as be objected.

I shall have done with Mr. Ball, when I have
 set down some off the last Words of the same
 Chapter, which I think very material to
 this point.

P. 186. ‘One or a few private Christians
 ‘to break off Society with the Church in
 ‘Prayer or Participation of the Sacraments,
 ‘because they are administred in a stinted
 ‘Liturgy, or the Corruptions pretended
 ‘therein, is a greater disorder and Corrupti-
 ‘on than any they can alledge in the Litu-
 ‘gy concerning Prayers or Administration
 ‘of the Sacraments; because in so mighty a bu-
 ‘siness they Challenge that Authority which
 ‘Christ never committed to them, and go
 ‘directly cross the order established by our
 ‘Saviour Christ.

So far concerning Mr. Ball's opinion: I
 hope my Readers will forgive me these long

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Citations; I think they are to the purpose, and I am sure the highest Church-man could not prove with better and stronger Arguments the Unlawfulness of our Brethrens Separation, than this Old Non-conformist Minister hath done.

Now I shall draw the Conclusion of my Argument from all those Authorities, and say, That if those Old Non-conformists thought that a Separation from our Church was unlawful and sinful, What Reasons can our Dissenters have to make it just and lawful? Hath the Church of *England* alter'd any thing in her Worship and Government since those times? Is she more defiled and corrupted than she was forty or fifty Years ago? I believe there is no Dissenter that would dare say so: But to convince them by the Words of one of the most Eminent Men amongst them, for whom (I know) they had an high Esteem and Value: I will cite Mr. *Baxter in the Defence of his Cure, &c.*

'The Old Non-conformists, saith he, were neither Blind nor Temporizers; they saw the danger on both sides, as well as we; our Light is not clearer, but less than theirs; we see not further into that Cause than they did. Change of time doth not change the Truth, nor will warrant us to change our Religion, unless we resolve to change as often as the times change. If we read over the Old Non-conformists Books against Separation, we shall find the same

Ob-

' Objections answered : Then judge whether
 ' their Case and ours was not the same. In-
 ' deed the Case of Ministers Conformity is
 ' much alter'd by a New Act, which re-
 ' quires subscribing New things: But that
 ' part of the Liturgy, which the People
 ' are to joyn in, is made better and easier,
 ' it being amended by change of the Tran-
 ' slation, and by some things explained, and
 ' some longer Prayers; And thirty Years ago
 ' there were many bare Reading, no Preaching
 ' Ministers, for one that there is now. There-
 ' fore our Case of Separation being the same
 ' with what it was of Old, it pities me to hear
 ' many say, we are grown wiser now, and
 ' have more Light than they: Whereas
 ' our Writings shew upon the same Subject,
 ' that we are far below them. The World
 ' knows that the Turn of the Times puts
 ' most of us into the sudden Possession of our
 ' Opinions, without one half of the Study,
 ' which *Ames, Cartwright, Parker*, and others
 ' bestowed upon these Points. As for them
 ' that say, if *Mr. Dod, Hildersham* and *Rogers*
 ' were now alive, they would have been of
 ' their Minds: I desire them to prove it, or
 ' not affirm it. Did the Old Non-confor-
 ' mists want Light and Heat, that could
 ' burn at a Stake for their Religion?

These are *Mr. Baxter's* own words, which
 I wish were written in CAPITAL LET-
 TERS upon the top of every Meeting-
 house Door, that our Dissenting Brethren
 might

might daily read in them the Sentence of their Condemnation, put out by one of their principal Champions.

It is needless to add any thing to this Declaration of Mr. *Baxter*: If the Old Non-conformists were in their right Senses, and understood as much of this Matter as any of our New Separatists, they were not mistaken in their Protestation against Separation: And it is to be wished that our Modern Dissenters might see as clearly as they, both the unlawfulness and the dangerous Mischiefs of their woful Separation.

So far I have done with this Argument, whereby it appeareth plainly, that the Opinion and Practice of most part of the Non-conformists were against Separation: And from thence, I conclude, that since there is no alteration made in the Church of *England* since their times, to warrant a Separation; That of our Dissenting Brethren now, is as unlawful as it was in the times of those Non-conformists.

Now I shall enter upon the SECOND PART of my Undertaking, and shall answer the chief Objections which our Dissenting Brethren do commonly make against the Church of *England*, to justify their Separation: But before I enter into these particulars, I desire my Readers to observe once more, that I shall not concern my self any farther in their Objections, than as they respect the Dissenters

as Lay Persons; and it is beyond my intended purpose to examine the Objections that the Dissenting Ministers make in reference to their Ministerial Office. And I think I have great Reason not to enter into the Discussion of their Ministry: For if the Peoples Separation be unlawful in it self, they cannot make it lawful out of any consideration to their Clergy; if the People were altogether depending upon their Ministers, and owed an implicate Faith to them, then they would be obliged to a blind Submission, without any further Examination, provided they were satisfied of the Lawfulness of their Ministry: But neither their Ministers do challenge such an Obligation from them, nor the People believe themselves to be under it. Besides, the Dissenting Ministers are not their lawful Superiours, to impose upon them any Ecclesiastical Obligations; but their respective Parish Ministers are their lawful Pastors, and to them they are obliged to give Attendance in Religious Matters. And there are the lawful Superiours in Church and State, to whom there lieth an Obligation on them to submit, when they prescribe nothing that is contradicted by the Word of God: For in that case *it is better to obey God than Man.* But there is nothing in the Church of *England* prescribed against the Word of God, (as I have made it appear) therefore they are obliged to submit, I say, to their lawful Superiours,

Superiours, but not to the Dissenting Ministers, who (as I have proved it also) cannot justify the Lawfulness of their Ministerial Office, neither by the Law of God, nor by any Humane Law : For, to plead the Toleration which is granted by Law, is no sufficient Plea : That Act of Toleration doth, I grant, take off the Penalty which the Humane Law did inflict upon them ; but it doth not make void the Law it self, which is still in being, tho' the Sanction of it be taken off. Lastly, it is to be consider'd, that Ministers are appointed for the Instruction, Edification, and Comfort, and other Spiritual Improvements of the People : But when those Improvements may be had in a lawful way, and that all necessary Provisions are to be met with in the Established Church, and delivered unto them by the means of a lawful Ministry ; no such regard is to be had for any other Ministry, as to engage the People in a Separation for the keeping of it up. For these Reasons, I think it needless to enter into the Consideration of those things that are objected by the Dissenting Ministers, as Ministers : Besides, it has been done already by able and eminent Men, and the Learned are acquainted enough with that kind of Controversie. I will therefore content my self to answer some of the chief Objections that concern the Dissenters, under the general Notion of Dissenting Christians from the Church of *England.*

OBJECTION. I.

That the Dissenters are not separated from the Church of England.

THE Dissenters say, That they are *falsly* charged with a Schismatical Separation, because they do not separate altogether from the Church of England; but they own (at least most part of 'em) that they may, and do Communicate with the Church; and tho' they do not make it a constant Practice, yet they do it sometimes, and as there is occasion, which is sufficient to keep themselves free from a Schismatical Separation.

I cannot conceive what is a real Separation from a Church, if the constant Practice of our Dissenting Brethren doth not make such a one from the Church of England; and if, in the former Ages of the Church, those that refused to Communicate with their own Bishops upon some personal Prejudices against them, and joyned in Communion with any other Bishops of the same National Church, where the same Doctrine was taught, the same Worship and Discipline observed, and the same Ministry kept, were treated and condemned as Schismatical Persons: I ask whether our Dissenting Brethren, in forsaking their Lawful Bishops and Pastors, and joyning to another Ministry, and to another way of Worship quite different from the Established Ministry and Wor-

Worship, do not make a greater Separation? And supposing it to be unlawful, whether it doth deserve any better Title, than that of a Schismatical Separation?

Here is the Notion of a Church-Separation; and I cannot imagine any other: When People meet together to serve God in a Place separate from the usual appointed Place, and in a manner quite differens from the Established manner of Worship; and by the means of a Ministry quite different from (yea, and set up in opposition to) the Established Ministry, and at the very time when they should attend to the Worship and Ministry of the Church: I think these People are in an actual State of Separation from the Established Church. But the Dissenters do constantly practice all these things; therefore they are in an actual State of Separation. I never saw a more real Separation in the whole History of the Church.

The Donatists were Separatists from the Church, and their first Separation was declared a Schism; and yet they held the same Doctrine, and the same Worship, and the same Ministry as the Catholic Church held: thus afterwards they increased the Guilt of Schism, by new Heretical Opinions.

The Dissenters may say to this, That a distinct Worship and Ministry from the Worship and Ministry of a certain Church, does not make a Schism, or separate from that Church; otherwise the Worship and Ministry of

Of the Church of England, which are to be
 distinguished from the Worship and Ministry of all
 the Protestant Churches abroad, would make
 a separate Communion from the Protestant
 Churches. But the Church of England doth
 pretend to live in Communion with all the foreign
 Protestant Churches, tho' her Worship and Mini-
 stry differ from theirs; therefore a distinct Wor-
 ship and Ministry from that of a certain Church,
 doth not make a separate Communion.

To answer this Objection and make it va-
 nish, it is but to observe, that the Notion of
 an Established National Church, differs
 much from the Notion of the whole Catho-
 lick Church. The distinct Worship and
 Ministry of one National Church, from the
 Worship and Ministry of another National
 Church, doth not make a Schismatical Sepa-
 ration between those two National Churches;
 nor in either of them a separate Communion
 from the Catholick Church. For a Nation-
 al Church may remain still a Member of the
 Catholick Church, and live in Communion
 with her; tho' the several National Churches
 do not observe the same outward man-
 ner of Worship and Government; because
 every National Church hath the Power and
 the Liberty to order these outward Circum-
 stances of Worship, as she thinks most fit
 for the Edification and Salvation of her Peo-
 ple, without any Danger of breaking Com-
 munion with the Catholick Church. And
 therefore we see in the History of the
 Church,

Church, that before the Bishop of Rome pretended to this high Degree of Power and Authority, and of making himself and his Church the Center and Rule of all Christian Churches, there were different ways and manners of Worship and Church-Government in the several National Churches, tho' they held Communion one with another. The *Armenian* Church had several Customs and Practices which were not observed in the *Latin* or *Greek* Churches; and the *Latin* and *Greek* Churches did observe neither the same Liturgies, nor the same Church Government; and yet they lived in Communion one with another. Every National Church using the Liberty she had to settle those outward Circumstances as she thought fit and convenient for the Welfare of that Church.

But when in the same National Church, a Separation of some Members of that Church is made, and Churches raised against Churches, as it was in the Case of the *Donatists*, who separated from the National Church of *Africa*; this is the Separation which is a Real and Sentimental Separation; and such is the Separation of our *Dissenters* from their National Church. They set up new Churches, and, against the Established Church, a New Worship, quite different from the Worship of their National Church, and in Opposition to it; and draw away the People from their lawful Ministers and Pastors, and withdraw themselves from that

Submission which they owe to their lawful Ecclesiastical Superiors.

As to what they say besides, that *they do now and then communicate with the Church of England*; this cannot be a proof of their Non-separation: For all the while they meet together in Church-congregations in a separate way from the Church of *England*, they are actually separated from her in Communion and Worship. And if once or twice in the year, or as occasion serveth for their present interest, they Communicate with the Church of *England*, they are no less Separatists for the time they are actually separated. It is the constant profession of a Religion, and not the now and then professing of another, which can make us pass to be of that Religion. Our Dissenting Brethren do not pretend to be *Levitudinarians*, that is, to believe that all Religions are good, and that it is indifferent what Religion soever they profess: No, I believe they affect their Dissenting Congregations, they profess to follow them, as thinking them to be of the best Religion; otherwise it would be ridiculous in them to withdraw themselves from their Parish Churches. Therefore they must in justice and reason own that Religion which they profess constantly to be their true Religion, and no other. For their occasional Communion with the Church of *England*, will never make them to be of the Religion of the Church of *England*, as long as they make it their Constant practice to profess another.

And

And indeed their occasional Communion, instead of excusing their Separation, maketh it rather worse: For, not to mention the abuse of the holy Sacrament, which seldom they receive with us, but upon the account of some worldly interest, which is a great profanation of that Sacrament: I say, that if so be they do it for that purpose, that they may be said not to Separate from us, it is a sign that they are Conscious of the unlawfulness of their Separation; for were they not, it would be much better to own freely their Separation, and justify it as well as they could, much better, I say, than to use such a disguised and unsincere way of proceeding as this is: To communicate once or twice in the year with the Church of *England*, that it may be said, they keep Communion with her, when all the while they meet in Separate Congregations upon every Sunday in the year: As this proceeding will never make their Separation no Separation, so it is a very unfair means or shift to make it seem so.

But lastly, To be fully satisfied that their Separation is a Real and Schismatical Separation, tis but to consider, that it hath all the ill effects and consequents of a Schismatical Separation, such as causing and producing a contempt of the established Church, of her Worship and Government, in the minds of the people, an alienating their minds and hearts from their lawful Superiors and Pastors, and breeding an unnatural hate and

aversness against a lawful compliance to the Ordinances of the Church; from which issue out divisions and quarrels, factions and contents, and such other mischiefs and calamities as have been mentioned before. These are the natural consequents of a real and actual Separation from the Church: And these are too easily to be seen here in our Nation. Our Dissenting Brethren will not have the boldness to deny this matter of fact; it sensibly affects both Church and State; Publick and private Societies feel but too much the fatal blows of it: So that we may reasonably conclude that as a Tree is known by its Fruit, and a Man by his Works, so the Separation of the Dissenters is known by its worul effects to be a real Schism: And as long as they shall continue in the same Separate condition, they shall also continue in the Guilt of Schism; and one time or other they shall answer before an Impartial Judge for all the terrible consequences of it.

There is but one way for them to avoid both the Judgments of God, and the Change of Schism, which is layd justly upon them, and that is to renounce all Separated Congregations, to hold constant communion with the established Church, to submit to her Ordinances and Government, and conform to her practices, to tolerate with a spirit of love and Christian Charity those parts of worship which they dislike, in making their remonstrances against those pretended defects of our Church

Church with a Spirit of Meekness and Humility, and waiting patiently for a Reformation of these pretended Abuses.

OBJECTION II.

That the Dissenters think themselves obliged to go to the place of Divine Service where they may receive better edification.

It is further Objected by our Dissenting Brethren, That they think themselves obliged to go to such Christian Congregations where they may receive better edification; and that the Separate Congregations bring forth more edifying than the Church of England both in respect of Divine Service and of Preaching; they think themselves obliged to follow those Separate Congregations.

I answer, I have seen the consequence of this. Suppose it were possible for them to be better edified in the Separate Congregations, they ought not for this cause only to separate from the Church: for no body ought to do an ill thing to arrive to a good end; and that it is an ill thing to break Communion with the established Church, I have sufficiently proved: If their Separation be unlawful and Schismatical, it is an ill thing, and the pretence of better edification can never make it good.

Suppose again that the Dissenters may receive some considerable advantage in preferring the Separate Congregations, this advantage is but peculiar to themselves, and none but they do partake of that benefit:

But the mischief and ill effects, which their Separation naturally produceth, are general to the whole Nation, and they themselves must in the end partake with the rest of the people of *England* in the Miseries and ill Consequence of it: And on the contrary, there is the general good and welfare of the whole of Church and Nation, such as Unity and Concord, Love and Charity, might which issue out their Conformity to the Church. Wherefore as a private advantage is not to be desired and obtained, when it cannot be got without a general disadvantage and detriment of a whole Nation: And as the publick good and welfare of the Church is to be prefer'd to the good and welfare of some members only of it; So consequently the Peace and Unity of the whole Church, is to be prefer'd to the better edification of some of its members; Seeing this better edification cannot be had without the loss of Christian Peace and Concord, and other advantages of the Church.

3. I would fain ask our Dissenting Brethren what they mean by this *better edification*, which they propose to themselves? It must needs be a better way, and better helps to serve God, to be instructed in their Christian Duties, and their having in that way all encouragements possible to a godly holy and upright life and conversation. I suppose this is the sense of what they call *better edification*. Now if all those things can be attained sufficiently in our Church, what need have they to

go and look for them any where else? But whoever is acquainted with the Church of England, her Divine Service and Ministry, knoweth that all those things can be attained by her Professors, and are really attained by those who diligently, carefully, and devoutly apply themselves to the performance of those Duties which she enjoyneth.

The Service of God in the Church-Assemblies is divided into two parts; the praying, and the hearing of the Holy Scriptures preached and expounded; besides the Sacraments.

As to the praying part; can it be denied that our Church is furnished with all necessary and sufficient provisions to serve and worship God in a manner that shall undoubtedly please him, if Men would but devoutly attend to our Service? No better Prayers can be composed or uttered by any Dissenting Ministers than the Prayers of our Church. I have insisted already upon the excellency of our Liturgy, and made it appear plainly, that the conceived or *extempore* Prayers of the Dissenting Ministers are much more deficient than the Prayers of our Church, and I gave a sufficient reason for it, in saying that those Prayers which have been composed with the concurrence of many Learned and Eminent Men upon all Accounts, and after long, serious, and premeditated Deliberations, must needs be much more perfect than sudden and unpremeditated Prayers, which
are

are the productions of a single Man; and that these, though uttered with much Zeal, and Fervor, and warm imagination, can never be accompanied with that exactness, seriousness, and judicious gravity, which becometh the great God, to whom they are directed. With reason therefore, I say, that our Church is provided with all necessary Offices to help the Devotions of Men, to enflame their Zeal, to strengthen their Faith, to elevate their hopes, and to Unite them unto God.

If I would go through all the particulars of our Liturgy, I could still better make appear the Solidity, Piety, Prudence, and Wisdom, and the Spirit of true Christianity which shines through all those particular Offices of our Divine Worship: But eminent Men having done this before me, I refer my Readers to their works and content my self to say, that the true Members of our Church have been, and are still, much edified by our Divine Worship: They receive great increases of Grace and Piety by joyning in it; and as their service is very acceptable and pleasing to God, so they are fully satisfied that their Salvation shall be promoted and secured in following and observing it: And I question not, but if the good People amongst our Dissenting Brethren would but divest themselves of those prejudices which they have taken so unjustly and groundlessly against our Common Prayers, they might have their share

share with us in the same, Graces, Blessings
and Comforts. And to the Honour of our Divine Service,
I will mention the general Commendation,
which all Protestant Churches in Foreign
Countries have given of our Liturgy, Trans-
lating it into their own Languages, exalting
the Prudence, Piety, and Christian Spirit of
the Authors of it, comforting and condemning
those that Separate from it, and some of
them wishing themselves so well provided
with such Means of Devotion.

But here cometh in my way an objection
against our Liturgy, which I would not men-
tion, being a mean one, were it not very of-
ten in the Mouths of Common and Ordinary
People, for whom especially I write these
Lines: They say, *If our Common Prayers are
so good, what need is there for us to go to Church
since we may read them at Home, and be as
much Edified by the Reading of them, as by the
Hearing them Read by a Minister? And there
is no more Edification in Hearing Divine Prayers,
which are to be Read in no Book, than to hear the
same things every Day.*

Those that make such an objection against
our Liturgy, are new men. Their Spirit moves them
in their Separated way: If it were the Zeal
and Glory of God, and a real design of
working out their own Salvation, they would
never think or speak so; but it appeareth that
their going into any Religious Congregation
is not to serve and Worship God, to beg

his

his Graces and Comforts, nor to be instructed in the Articles of their Faith, nor to receive any Improvements of Piety, Goodness, Sanctification, and Vertue, but it is altogether to hear new things, to examine censure, or admire the Ministers Parts both in Praying and Preaching; this is what is call'd Edification; but whatever is Printed in a Book and may be Read at Home, that can never Edifie them in the Church. But let an *extempore* Prayer be uttered with an affected Zeal and Fervor, with Tears and Passion, with ridiculous looks and unmanly postures, and stufte with nonsense and impertinencies, this must be prefer'd before the best Collect in the common-prayer-book.

I ask whether this deserveth the denomination of Piety, Devotion, and Edification? And whether it can deserve any better Title than sensual curiosity and vain affectation? They will go to their Meeting-houses, as Men go to a Play-house, to hear some fine things that may Tickle their Ears, delight their Senses, and please their Humors and Fancies. I cannot see how such People can pretend to serve God, when in effect they serve nothing but their Passions: But how can they be delighted with his sacred Word, which is Old and Common, when they are so Fond of Novelties and Rarities?

Let them fill their Hearts with a sincere desire of promoting the Glory of God, and the Work of their Salvation; let them have no
other

other Mind but to Serve and Worship God, to receive his Blessings and Comforts, to Praise him for his Favours, and to be instructed in their Faith, and in the ways of Goodness and Vertue: and let all these Christians Duties be performed without any Temporal, Carnal or Sensual Consideration, and then they may find in the service of our Church, means and provisions enough for their Spiritual Edification; yea, much better than in any Separate Congregations, which are very deficient in the proper means of Piety and Devotion; and this may appear to any reasonable Person, who mindeth the Spirit more than the Flesh, and applieth himself more to the inside of Religion and Piety, than to the outward circumstances of Devotion.

As to their staying at Home in the time of the Divine Service, and Reading there the Prayers of the Church, I say, that those, who speak so, do know but little what are the Graces and Comforts which God is pleased to bestow upon the Faithful, when they meet together in his House: Can they receive at Home the absolution of their Sins, which the Minister pronounceth in the Church in the Name and Authority of God? Can they be Partakers of those general Blessings which God dispenseth to his Holy Congregations? God hath ordained that the Members of his Church should meet together to Honour his Holy Name, to Pray to him and Praise him, and

to return him their Humble Thanks for all his Benefits and Favours; and it is the bounden Duty of all Christians to Honour God in Publick and Worship him in the Assemblies of his Saints; he declareth that such publick service is most acceptable to him. I know that God is pleased to accept of our Private Devotions, but he enjoineth us to Worship him in Publick as well as in Private; yea more especially in Publick; and the wilful neglect of that Duty is a great Sin which is not easily pardoned.

Besides, our Common Prayers are not so peculiarly appointed for Private Devotions; But they are called *Common*, for their common and publick use in the Church; so that their Reading of them at Home, without going to Church, doth not answer the real design of their Authors, which is, that all the Faithful should joyn together in the House of God, and make those common addresses to him in general in a Publick Service.

Thus I have answered that common objection of the Dissenters against our Liturgy, and by the way have made it appear that in it there are sufficient provisions of Worship and Devotion, for the Edification of all sincere Christians who will conform to it.

As to the other part of our Publick Service, which is that of hearing the Sermons and the expounding of the Word of God; I cannot imagine how our dissenting Brethren can pretend to a better Edification among their Ministers than

than with us? Are not the Articles of Faith absolutely necessary to Salvation; clearly and plainly expounded by our Ministers, without any Mixture of Error, false Glosses, or curious and vain Scholastical Positions? Is not the necessity of good Works and of a Holy Life, as much pressed and urged in our Church, as amongst them? Are not Sin, and Wickedness, and Vice, as much Discountenanced and brought down, and Vertue as much exalted and Recommended in our Church, as in their Separate Congregations? In a Word, are not all the Christian Duties, both to God and Man, as much enforced upon the Lives and Conversations of Christians in our Church, as any where else? What better Edification then can they pretend or expect any where else, than in our Church? And where is that Christian Church in any part of the World, which can pretend to out-do the Divines of our Church, not only in regard of sound Doctrine, but also in judgment of Conception, in strength of Arguments, in Gifts of Eloquence and Elocution, and all tending to the instruction of the ignorant, to strengthen the weak, comfort the afflicted, convince the unbeliever, convert the wicked, and confirm the good in the ways of Piety and Vertue? Our Dissenters will not deny this, if there be any Sincerity or Ingenuity in them; that infinite Numbers of excellent Sermons, which are daily Poured from our Church Ministers, are good Evidences

Evidences that the Church of England is sufficiently furnished with Edifying Preachers; and those who make it their constant practice to come and hear the Sermons, even of our ordinary Ministers, if they have a Real and Sincere desire of Edification, may there have it sufficiently for their Salvation. Wherefore it appeareth that what the Dissenters call better *Edification*, is nothing but Prejudice and Fancy, or a censorious inclination to find fault where there is none.

If they seek for Edification, they may have enough of it in our Church; but if they think it so necessary, they should also procure it to their fellow Christians, who are far from being Edified by them, when on pretence of better *Edification*, they Separate from their Communion, and run away from their Mother-Church; and instead of contributing to the Edification of the Church, by Living in Peace, Love, and Concord, and being content with the wholesome Spiritual Food which the Church affords to every condition of Men; they prefer some Enthusiastick raptures and flights, which in their opinion will pass for better Edifying, yea, as good as if they were the dictates of the Holy Spirit, and the Teachings of God himself; when as, at best, they are but the Productions of Natural Parts, though much exalted and Magnified by Common and Ignorant People.

In a Word, let our Dissenting Brethren call what they please Edification; it is very certain

certain that whosoever will be truly honest, Sincerely Devout, and perfectly desirous to Work out his Salvation, will find full Satisfaction in our Church ; provided he entertains no prejudice against her, nor espouses a contrary faction: Rightly I add this *Proviso*: For without doubt if there were neither prejudice, nor party, nor faction, there would no be Dissenters from our Church: And if there were nothing else but a Spirit of Christianity, of Love and Charity in Mens Religion, they would not go out of their Brethrens Communion to look after Edification. Therefore I conclude, that what they call Edification is nothing but Faction; and what may be the ill consequents of it, we may judge by the fatal experience we have already had in this Nation. Under pretence of better Edification; the People run away from their Lawful Pastor; let him be never so diligent and careful in the performance of his Pastoral Office, he may be forsaken, as well as he that hath less care and ability; from him they will Run to another Teacher, whom they may like better for a while; but will soon again Change both Church and Man, and so go from Meeting to Meeting, from Presbytery to Independency, from thence to Anabaptism, or Quakerism, till at last they will be Edified no where; and too often it happens, that Irreligion and Atheism take place of better Edification.

OBJECTION. III.

That Wicked and Prophane Persons are suffered in our Church, and even admitted to the Sacrament of the Lords Supper,

THE Dissenters object against their Communion with the Church of England, *That Wicked and Prophane Persons are suffered in our Church, and even admitted to the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, tho' they give no tokens of their Repentance and Amendment; therefore, say they, we cannot in Conscience joyn with such Persons in the Divine Worship, and least of all receive the Holy Sacrament with them, without danger of being defiled in such a Corrupted Society: I answer,*

I. How Happy are our Dissenters in their Separate Congregations, that no Wicked and Prophane Persons are to be seen there! I do confess, if I thought this to be true, I should be apt also to think that they are the only good Christians in the World, and that the true Christian Church is only with them, and I would not Live long in the World without desiring to be admitted into their Holy Congregations, and be made a Member of their Church.

But, I doubt, it is much otherwise; and if their Ministers will speak true, they will say as much. To my knowledge there are several bad Persons, who make it their constant practice to joyn with them in their Publick Congregations, even Scandalous Livers,
Drun-

Drunkards, Swearers, and Prophaners of the Holy things. Who is that Dissenting Minister that would be bound for the Piety and good life of all, or half of those that come to hear him? Nay, of all that Communicate with him in the Sacrament of the Lords Supper? I doubt not but there is more of presumption and self-good opinion, as well as more want of Charity in this Objection, than of Religion and Fear of Pollution.

It is well known that many Persons go to Meetings out of pleasure and curiosity, to see and hear a new way of Worship and Preaching, or at least new Preachers; how many, besides that, do the same in spight and contempt of their Lawful Pastor? Not that they have any just cause to condemn his Person or his Preaching, but most commonly upon the account of some Temporal interest; or very often because their Parish Minister hath been so bold as to have Rebuked them severely for their disorderly and Wicked Lives, though in the doing of it he did but perform his Duty. I grant, there may be a great many good Souls amongst them, who, I think, if they were perswaded of the Unlawfulness of their Separation, would not long continue with them: But it is also very certain that an infinite Number of Wicked Prophan Persons and Hypocrites do frequent their Congregations.

To this, they say, *Though the Doors are opened indifferently to all sorts of People that desire to come and hear us, Yet we are very cautious in reference to the Sacrament, and admit none thereto but those whose good Life and Conversation appeareth evidently to us.* I doubt not but their Leaders may be much Mistaken in that point too: For how many of those People are admitted to the Sacrament, who live so far off from their Dissenting Minister, that he cannot be acquainted with all their Conversations, nor yet with the Tenor of their Lives? For example, I would fain ask my Neighbour Dissenting Minister, Whether a Man, who hath quarrelled with his own Minister, and went from his Parish Church to the Meeting out of Hatred and Animosity against his Lawful Pastor, is well prepar'd and disposed to receive the Holy Sacrament? If he think such a Man is not well qualified according to the Scripture, which biddeth him *to go and reconcile himself to his Brother, before he cometh to the Altar and makes his Oblation*; why then doth he admit him to the Sacramental Communion? For I know that there are several such Persons, who receive the Sacrament among them; and I think this to be very Scandalous.

If this Dissenting Minister say, That he knoweth none to be such Persons; and that, if he had known them, he would not have admitted them; that he doth question, and exhort, and prepare, as well as he can, every
Member

Member in particular that desireth to be admitted. And so do we: We Ministers of the Church of *England* declare to the Congregation the danger of approaching near to the Holy Table without due Preparation; and we invite none to draw near, but those that truly repent, ^{see the Office of} are in Love and Charity with ^{the Communion.} their Neighbours, and intend to lead a new Life, following the Commandments of God. We may safely declare that we know no others that receive the Sacrament amongst us; we may know that some of 'em have been wicked and ill Livers; but who can tell whether God Almighty hath not given them the Grace of Repentance and Conversion? I grant we may be mistaken in our charitable Judgment: But however we invite none to come, but those who repent and live in Love and Charity with all Men. And if any others do come, they themselves shall suffer for their unworthy receiving, but not we that know them not to be such. Therefore you see that our Dissenting Brethren's Care for the Preparation of their Receivers, and for the Admittance of none but those that are worthy, not only is not better nor greater than that which is taken in our Church; but even is not so good or so much, and is more liable to Mistakes, considering that the Parish Minister is much bet-

ter acquainted with his Communicant Parishioners, with whom he lives constantly, than a Dissenting Minister can be with his Congregation, that may live in ten or twelve Parishes. I shall not insist any longer upon the Examinations the Dissenting Ministers make of their Communicants; but perhaps good Fortunes and worldly Riches, whereby they are enabled to contribute to the Maintenance of their Dissenting Pastors, are no indifferent Qualifications amongst them.

2. Why? If we grant that prophane, scandalous, and vicious Persons are suffered in our Church, and even admitted to the Holy Communion, is that a sufficient cause for a Separation from the Church? I confess if the Church had any Hand in those Disorders, and would countenance those Scandals, the Church should be blamed, and a Separation would be more justifiable, or rather less culpable, than now it is. But, as I said before, there is nothing in the Worship and Service of the Church, that can be said to favour Prophaneness and Irreligion: The Doctrine of the Church, and the Sermons daily preached therein, declare openly enough against all sorts of Vices. And who is that most vicious Man, if he will come and hear our Sermons, who shall not be sufficiently encouraged to a speedy Repentance and Reformation, if he would but reduce to practice those Exhortations which

are given in our Church? Neither the Dissenting Ministers, nor we, can pretend to a better ability than Christ our Saviour and his Apostles, who tho' they pros-
 ecuted great Multitudes, yet converted not all their Hearers: And yet our Saviour and his Apostles continued to Preach among them, nor did they forbear to converse with those wicked Unbelievers, who persisted to the end of their Lives in their evil courses. Let us not pretend to be wiser than our Saviour himself, who was pleased to communicate with Judas, whom he knew to be a wicked Man, even his Persecutor and Betrayer: Therefore there is no sufficient Reason for them, who believe themselves worthy Receivers, to withdraw themselves from the Holy Sacrament under that Presence, that those who are unworthy, even prophane and scandalous Livers, are also admitted.

I will mention once more Mr. Ball, who was an Old Non-conformist Minister, tho' he did not separate from the Church. The Title of the Tenth Chapter of his Tryal, &c. already cited, is this: *It is lawful to communicate in a mixed Congregation, where ignorant and prophane Persons be admitted to the Sacrament.* This Chapter, which is very long, is a continual Answer to this Objection of our Separatists. I think it needless to transcribe all that he saith upon this Head: But be-

cause the Testimony of such a Man may possibly have a good Influence on the Minds of those, for whom I design these Papers, I will set down before them some part of his Second Argument. He speaketh thus;

If the Presence of the Wicked doth not defile Gods Ordinance to the worthy Receiver; then it is lawful to receive the Sacrament in a mixt Congregation, where scandalous Persons are admitted: (for what but Pollution or Defilement can warrant voluntary Separation and Departure from the Lords Ordinance?) But the Presence of the Wicked doth not defile Gods Ordinance to the worthy Receiver. The simple presence doth not defile; for then the Presence of close Hypocrites and secret Dissemblers, who are in Truth unworthy, tho' they do not appear so to us, should pollute and defile. Nor his Knowledge of their Unworthiness; for then Judas his Presence had stained the Ordinance of God in our Saviour himself, to whom the Unworthiness of Judas was well known; then one Man should be bound in Conscience to Excommunicate another, or himself rather, before the Matter be brought to the Church; yea, for that which in Conscience cannot be brought into the Church. Nor the notorious Knowledge of their Unworthiness; seeing he hath no Power to repel them, nor leave from Christ to withdraw or separate himself from the Society.

It is the Duty of a good Christian to withdraw himself from all private familiarity with the Wicked, and by no voluntary Friendship to ensnare himself with them; But it is one thing to avoid the private Society of wicked Men; another for the Hatred of the Wicked to renounce the Publick Communion of the Church, and so of Christ, who is present with his people. The Duties which I owe to a Brother in this course, I must perform; but privately excommunicate him, or Separate my self from the Congregation for his sake, I must not, because I have no Charge from God, no pattern from the goodly so to do. My Communion with the scandalous in that case, is not free and voluntary upon mine own head; but necessary in respect of Duty enjoyned of God, through the enforcing Law of meeting the Lord in his holy Ordinances, and preserving the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace and Love. If therefore the Life be corrupt, not from corrupt Doctrine, but contrary to the Doctrine received, we must do as the Prophets and holy Servants of God did in those corrupt times, pray, mourn, exhort, reprove, threaten, give good examples; But we must not depart or Separate from the Society where Christ is present by his Grace and Holy Ordinances. The Ordinances of Grace (saith he a little further) are not denied to the worthy Receiver by the presence of such as should

should be censured; nor must he withdraw himself from the Holy things of God, because such as ought not, are suffered to partake; so long as Christ is pleased to bear with their manners, and to continue amongst them for their refreshing who in truth of heart draw nigh unto him.

Thus did write this Old Non-conformist Minister, and thus, I wish, all our Dissenting Brethren would think. I thought his Argument too strong and too Convincing to be omitted on this present Subject.

3. And Lastly, If our Dissenting Brethren look upon themselves to be so good, and so well reformed upon all accounts, methinks they should be Charitable also, and desirous to communicate the same Spirit of Piety and Regeneration to their Brethren of the Church of *England*, whom they think so much corrupted in their morals. I do believe that Christianity doth teach them as much as that, to do what good they can in the World: And this they might do in joyning with us, and giving a good example to, and admonishing those that want correction. If they are so averse to wickedness and corruption, as they would perswade us they are, there would be no danger of being defiled by the ill examples of our people; but rather they and we might hope that their good Life and Conversation would have a happy influence upon the generality of our corrupted members.

as little to receive the presence of such as should

But

But especially this general good might be expected from their Ministers, if they would but joyn with us, and conform in all respects: since (as they do report it themselves) they are so beneficial to their own people, and great Conversions are wrought by their Ministry; I should think their Charity should be much more commendable if it were extended over all the Nation, and that they would exercise their extraordinary talents in all the open and Publick Places of Worship, as our Saviour did Preach and Exhort both in the Temple of Jerusalem, and in all Synagogues of the Jews, without any respect to the great corruptions and profanations which were so common among them, but they pretend to be followers of Christ and his Apostles, and to be the bright shining Stars of the Church, they should not keep their brightness under their Light under a Bushel, for that it should shine only in some Remote Places, where but some Members of the Church may go and be enlightened by them; but their Light should shine, and their Voice sound over all the Land, to the shame and confusion of those poor Preachers of the English Church; I shall not which Mr. Calamy, in his Book *Defence of moderate conformity* q. 2. p. 245. is pleased to expose so much to the view of the Publick. *Is not, saith he, a truly pious Man, speaking of himself, and supposing, that wisely makes Conscience of his words and ways, and has a tolerable share of Learning, and*

a tolerable way of praising himself too) more likely to be moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon him the Office of the Ministry, than one that gapes for Preferment, neglects his Cure, converses most with the most dissolute in his Parish, and discourages such as are the most Conscientious?

I would fain also put this Question to Mr. Calamy who is so apt to put so many to others: Whether this is one of the motions that he hath received from the Holy Ghost to lay such Charges and such Enormous Crimes upon them (See Quest. 8. 134) whom he calls his Brethren, though he is pleased to accuse them besides of Ignorance, Prophaneness, and Simony, and of being guilty of gross and pernicious Corruption? Indeed if it be so bad with us as we are represented by this good, faithful, and laborious Minister of the Gospel, methinks Christianity should Oblige him and his Brethren to pass over those Scruples of Conscience, and yield even to be Re-ordained, that they might (in imitation of St. Paul, who conformed himself to the unnecessary methods both of Jews and Gentiles) gain more people to the true profession of the Christian Religion, and make it flourish amongst us.

Mr. Calamy is pleased to ask this Question, which we may answer with another, Quest. 9. p. 1d. Is it not a visible benefit to any Parish to have a Dissenting Minister open a Meeting in it, where instead of one hasty Sermon in a Week or a Fortnight, the Parishioners shall from that time forward, besides the labours of such an Assistant in publick

publick and private, have two well Study'd Sermons in the publick Church? I Answer.

Is it not a much greater benefit to any Parish that all the Dissenting Ministers of *England* should be Re-ordained, and give their labours and pains to the Church of *England* in Preaching as Assistants to the Parish Ministers, and thereby restoring Peace and Unity in the Church, than to open a meeting in every Parish, which opens a larger way to disorders, confusions, quarrels and hatred? I see no benefit in Mr. *Calamy's* project, but a world of mischiefs would come out of it; and on the contrary, nothing but Peace, Unity, Love and Charity, with a great many other Advantages to the Church, might be the comfortable Productions of their Re-ordination and Conformity to the Church. Mr. *Calamy* and his Brethren, who believe themselves much better qualified for the holy Ministry than the Clergy of the Church of *England*, should, I think, make no scruple to conform to the rule of the Church (which he cannot deny did stand ever since the beginning of the Second Century; as it hath been owned by the most Eminent Protestants in foreign Countries though favourers of Ordination by Presbyters; altho the Eminent Divines of our Church have plainly made it appear that the Ordination by Bishops is of Apostolical Institution) that they might advance and promote the Kingdom of Christ and the Salvation of Men. They may consider that according

cording to that high opinion they have of themselves, they should by their Conformity contribute more advantage to the Church, than inconveniencies or harm to themselves.

If they say to this, That for the same reason the Church of *England* might admit them into her Ministry without a Re-ordination, I reply, Perhaps the Church of *England* would do it, if there was such an urgent Occasion of their service: But our Church doth not take her Clergy to be so bad and so wicked, so ignorant and prophane, so guilty of the neglect of their Cures, and so addicted to converse with the most dissolute of their People, as Mr. *Calamy* tells us. No, on the contrary, the Church of *England* thinks that there is no Christian Church, not Excepting that of Mr. *Calamy's*, that hath a Clergy better qualified upon all accounts for the holy Ministry, more eminent in Learning, more laborious in their Pastoral Cares, and whose Lives and Conversations are more suitable to their holy Calling. I grant there may be some whose abilities are but weak, and whose behaviour is not altogether blameless; but Mr. *Calamy* might in truth grant as much in relation unto his own Brethren. And if the number of such is not so great among them, the reason is evident, their Clergy is not so numerous as ours by a great deal: Nine Thousand and Five Hundred Parishes are not so Easily provided with Pastors well qualified upon all accounts.

However

However, I cannot see what reason Mr. Calamy hath to insist so much upon the great fruits of his and his Brethren's Ministry for a plain evidence of the lawfulness and regularity of it. I do not intend to enter into that controversy, he hath abler men to deal with, that will give him full satisfaction. But I will only make this Observation, That the great Success which Preachers have in reforming the Morals of their Hearers, is not always an evidence of the lawfulness and regularity of their Ministry. I observed, during my stay in Popish Countries, especially in the City of Paris, what alterations a famous Jesuit made in the Morals of Men by his Lent-Sermons, what reformations, what restitution of goods to their lawful owners, what number of Men and Women rescued out of the most base debaucheries by the means of this Man's Preaching? I am sure two years of Mr. Calamy's Sermons, Preached even in St. Paul's Church in London, will not have a better effect in the Reformation of the manners of Men, then one single Lent Preaching of that Jesuit had: And yet Mr. Calamy will not allow the Ministry of that Jesuit to be very lawful and regular. Balaam was a false Prophet, and yet it was God's pleasure to make use of his Ministry to give unto the World one of the most considerable Prophecies of the coming of Christ. Therefore it appeareth how weak the Argument of Mr. Calamy is, to prove the lawfulness and Regularity of the Dissenting Ministry, by the

the great good which is done by it in the conversion of Sinners: Since the Ministers of false and superstitious Religions may have, and have in truth, as good success in the reformation of manners.

I would not have insisted so long on this Head, had I not been prompted to it by Mr. Calamy's late Book, where he enlargeth so much upon the great Proficiencies of his Ministry, and where his Reflections are so censorious and bitter upon the Clergy of the Church of England. It seemeth, though he tell us in his Pre-

face, that *He was aware that he was not managing a Controversie with Enemies, but with Brethren; and though he declareth that he hath no Talent in hard Words, foul*

Language, and he maketh this Observation, that Passion is a Blind, and not a Guide, and that he that Writes in a Violent Heat, hazardeth the loss of that which is to the full as valuable as that he pretends to seek; for he seeks Truth and endangers Charity: Yet it appeareth in several parts of his Book, that he did not observe his own Cautions, nor keep within the Bounds of Decency, as he promiseth in the same place. I think in Writing so against his own Words, he hath much Endanger'd, both Truth, and Charity; for the seeking and preserving of which, he appeareth so Tender and Zealous.

But to come again unto our Brethren's objection, We do grant that Corruptions are very great, that Prophanations and all sorts of Vices

Vices are too common amongst us ; but this great Evil, instead of forcing the Dissenters to Separate from us , should rather engage them to remain with us, and offer their help to the best of us, for a General Reformation of the whole Nation: If all good People were United together , and agreed in the same Method, for the suppressing Vice , and promoting whatever is good and Vertuous, we might have a prospect of better success : And I think such a Brave and Unanimous Enterprise, free from all Passion and Party, and all other Worldly ends and purposes, might be much more Commendable before God and Men , than a Separation of those that look upon themselves , as the best reformed ; of the Nation ; as if God and his Religion were to be engrossed to themselves, and they were alone the beloved chosen of God ; and all the rest his Enemies. It is plain, that there is a great want of Charity, as well as a large Portion of Self-love, and conceited Opinion in their wilful Separation. It is commonly said, that those that are good only for themselves, are good for nothing.

But besides, it may be considered that one of the chief causes of so much Corruption and Prophaneness among the Members of the Church of *England*, is this fatal Separation; and the Toleration which every Body hath at this time , to choose what Religion they please ; for thereby the Church hath not the power to exercise her Discipline, against her

Corrupted and Debauched Members: If there is any attempt made towards it, and any Prosecution against any Scandalous Liver, he doth not fail to plead the Liberty of Conscience, he will turn Dissenter, and then the Officers of the Church have nothing more to do with him. And is it certain, if the Parish Ministers take upon themselves the Liberty to reprove and rebuke some of the Parishioners, who lead Prophane and Scandalous Lives, they do not keep long those Wicked Persons amongst the Members of the Church: Such Sinners, instead of submitting to the gentle Correction and Reproof of their lawful Pastors, not only separate from their Ministry, but even abuse them at a sad rate, and so fall into an open Rebellion against the Church, and a wilful contempt of her Discipline, and of the Correction of her Ministers. There is no Parish Minister in *England*, but is sensible of the great Mischief of the Toleration which is granted unto the Dissenters, as being the cause of the remissness of Church Discipline, which occasions more Lewdness and Prophanation amongst the People. Now it is evident, that if there was no Separation from the Church, it would be much easier for the Officers of it, to confine all her Members within the Bounds of a Christian Life, and to put the Ecclesiastical Laws in Execution against all vicious and refractory Persons, without any Danger of driving them away from their Duty to the Church, and to her Ministers.

But

But because there is but a little prospect, that our Dissenting Brethren will be perswaded to renounce their Separation, and reunite themselves to the Church, by the consideration of this motive alone, though it is a very considerable one, since their Separation openeth a larger Door to Corruption and Vice, and obstructeth the Execution of our Ecclesiastical Laws, it is to be wished, that there was some restraint to prevent this Toleration from being abused to such a degree as it is now; I am not against the use of it by the Dissenters, as long as it is our Superiours Pleasure that they should enjoy it. But I think there might be some provision made to prevent such mischiefs as that which I mentioned just now. This might be done, if there was an Order that none should presume to Separate from the Church, but those that would declare upon their Oaths, before a Magistrate, or any other lawful Authority, that no other Motive but that of Religion and Conscience doth engage them to Separate from the Church of *England*; and that no Worldly or exact Temporal Interest, or Purpose, had any Hand in their Separation? And for an exact execution of this order, the Dissenting Ministers should have the Liberty to admit to their Congregations none but those that will produce such Affidavits under the Hand and Seal of a Magistrate. Now it is easie to see that such an order would not entrench upon the Liberty of Conscience, so as to force

People to the Church against their Judgment, but would only prevent the Abuses of it to Temporal and Civil Regards; and in the meanwhile, the Toleration which is now in being, should no more be a hindrance to the Church, in executing her Discipline against her Corrupt and Prophan Members.

And it seems to me that the Dissenters should not be against such an Order, since they should lose nothing thereby, but the Presence of such People in their Congregations as do them no good, and are rather spots and blemishes to their party, than any thing else. They should have but conscientious Members, who joyn with them by a meer Motive of Religion: And as to the others, the Church should have full Liberty to manage them as she should think fit for the Glory of God, the Edification of the Church, and the Salvation of all her Members. To conclude this Point, I think our Dissenting Brethren have no reason at all to mention the Corruptions of the Members of our Church as a lawful cause of their Separation, since it appears so plainly, that their Separation is, in part, a great cause of those Corruptions of our Members.

OBJECTION. IV.

That the Church of England imposeth Terms and Conditions of Communion, which the Dissenters cannot submit unto, without acting against their Conscience.

THE Dissenters do commonly object, that the Church of England doth impose such Terms and Conditions of Communion which they cannot submit unto, without acting against their Conscience: And they say besides, if their Separation be sinful, 'tis not the Dissenters that are guilty of that Sin, but the Charge lieth on the Church, which forceth them to Separate, by imposing upon them those humane practices, which they think contrary to the Liberty of the Christian Religion, and which have no Foundation in the Word of God.

I had occasion before to answer this objection in general, and made it appear, that though the Church hath not Power to impose upon her Members any Doctrine or Worship which is essential and fundamental in Religion, and not contained in the Word of God, yet she hath Power given her by the Scripture, to impose the outward Circumstances of Worship, Discipline and Government, for the observation of that Scripture order, that every thing in the Church, may be done in order, decently and to Edification. So that if it be proved that the Church imposeth

And nothing in the Outward circumstances of Worship and discipline that is contradicted by the Scripture.

nothing of Doctrine and Fundamentals of Religion, but what is grounded upon the Scripture, it will evidently appear that there is no Terms of Communion unlawfully imposed in our Church, and conse-

quently they cannot be brought in as a lawful cause of Separation; and therefore if our Dissenting Brethrens Separation is unlawful, the Sin thereof doth not lie upon the charge of the Church, which imposeth nothing unlawfully; but altogether upon those who wilfully Separate from her without any lawful cause. This Argument having been urged before more at large and in its full force, now I intend to examine in particular, and one by one, those Terms of Communion which the Dissenters object against, as being unlawful: And here, before I go any farther, I will repeat what I have said already, that I do not concern myself with the Objections made by the Dissenting Ministers, as being Ministers: I have given before the reasons I have not to do it at this time, therefore I shall answer only the objections that regard the people in general, as Lay-Men and Christians.

Neither do I intend to answer the particular Objections of the Dissenters that are called *Anabaptists* and *Quakers*, and concern their particular opinions. This undertaking would carry me too far, and much beyond the design of these Papers: Besides, I think it altogether

gether needless to my main purpose, having few or none of those two Extravagant Per-
swasions in my Parish: But the Dissenters I
aim at, are *Presbyterians* and *Independents*.
And to them I say that there are but three
practises in the Church of England which
they can object against, as being imposed upon
all the members of the Church. And these are,

1. The requiring Godfathers and Godmo-
thers in the Baptism of Children.
 2. Crossing of Children in that Sacrament.
 3. Kneeling at the receiving of the Sacra-
ment of the Lord's Supper.
- All the other
Rights and Ceremonies, and parcels of Di-
vine Service, which the Dissenters think to
be unlawful; cannot be said to be imposed on
the People, not so much as their assent and
approbation of them are required, but only
their toleration, which cannot defile them, as
I made it appear before, and consequently can-
not be a lawful cause of Separation. There-
fore if I can prove the lawfulness of these
three practises of our Church, I think I shall
have given a full answer unto this Objection.

*Of Godfathers and Godmothers in the Baptism of
Children.*

TO justify this practice of our Church,
it is but to represent the true intent
and design of it, which is, that those persons,
who present an infant to the Church to be ad-
mitted to the Covenant of the Christian Re-
ligion, should enter into an Engagement to

See that the Child, as he grows in age, should be Educated in the Doctrine and Principles of that Covenant, and be brought up in the performance of the Baptismal Vow : So that they become Sureties for the Infant to the Church, that as much as in them lie, they will look to it, and have those promises made by them in the name of the Child, effectually performed by him, when he is in a capacity to do it. Now what can be said to be unlawful in this design, which aims altogether at the good and welfare of those that are Baptized ? Is there any thing in this contrary to the Gospel ? Can any body find our practice in this respect superstitious, or even altogether unnecessary ? If the Church takes all possible care that all her members be brought up to the knowledge and practice of all Christian Duties, is she to be blamed for this ? And doth she deserve to be forsaken, for her tender concerns of her Children ?

Against this the Dissenters make two Exceptions.

1. That the Parents are the fittest persons to enter into that engagement to see their Children brought up in the way of Godliness and Piety, and have a Christian Education.

2. That Experience proves plainly enough the inutility of this order, since few Godfathers or Godmothers ever enter into the cognisance of the matter ; so that it is not only useless, but even sinful, seeing it Exposeth unavoidably all Godfathers and Godmothers to the sins of unfaithfulness
and

and perjury, which the Church is guilty of, by engaging those persons to a solemn promise before God and his Church, which the Church her self knows will never be performed.

To the first Exception I answer, that the Church hath great reason to suppose that the natural affection which Parents owe to their Children, as well as to their Religion, do sufficiently engage them to take care of their Childrens Education, without entring into a new Engagement with the Church for that purpose. And if other persons are required for the same, it is a greater security that the Church demands for the performance of the thing. For the Parents being engaged before by other Obligations, and those Sureties entring into the same engagement by their promises, it is more likely that the thing shall be done; when four or five creditable persons enter into an Obligation for the payment of a Debt, is it not a better security to the Creditor than to have but one or two bound for his Money? Where is the unlawfulness of all this?

Further, It is to be considered, that those who are chosen for Godfathers and Godmothers, are chosen by the appointment of the Parents; so that 'tis properly from the Parents that they receive their commission to enter into an engagement with the Church for the Children; and the Parents, by appointing such persons for their Childrens Security, are included in the same engagement
and

and contract with the Church. And it is their Duty to choose none for such, but those they think are qualified for the undertaking: And this the Church not only supposeth, but even prescribeth, in ordering that none shall be Godfathers or Godmothers, but those that have received the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

Besides, It is known, that it happens but too often, that the Parents are very ignorant and careless in the Education of their Children; and the Church, which is sensible of it, hath good reason to require other Sureties for the security of the good Education of Children. Every body may Marry and have Children, Ignorant and Irreligious persons, as well as others; but it is supposed that those who are chosen for Godfathers and Godmothers may have better principles of Religion; for none ought to be chosen but those who receive the Sacrament, who are more likely to take care of those Children for whose Education they engage themselves by solemn promises, than Ignorant and Irreligious persons. But if Godfathers and Godmothers do neglect the performance of their undertakings, they only are to be blamed, but not the Church, whose intention is good and pious in the order and prescription of it. And this brings me to the second Exception of the Dissenters, who say that *the Common practice sheweth the inutility and vanity of the Order, and even Exposeth those Sureties to the Sins of unlawfulness and perjury,*

jury, since few Godfathers and Godmothers ever enter into the cognisance of the matter; and that the Church knowing that those solemn promises made before God and his Church, will never be performed, is to answer for those Sins.

To this I reply, that if the order is good and lawful in its self, tending only to the promoting of Religion among all the members of the Church, as our Dissenting Brethren cannot deny that it doth; the Church doth not become responsible for the abuse of it, and the neglect of those who are wanting in the performance of their undertakings: The usefulness and lawfulness of an Order, or of a Rule and Custome in the Church, must be judged from the good that comes from the Observation of it, and not from the abuse and neglect of the same; Otherwise there can be no Order lawfully prescribed upon any account whatsoever; for there is none, either of Divine or Humane Institution, that is kept, and not abused by Christians. For Example, If an Order is not to be imposed in the Church, because it is apt to be abused, then the Lord's Supper is not to be imposed on Christians, because a great many persons that receive it, do abuse it, and instead of receiving it to their Comfort, and the bettering of their Lives, receive it to their condemnation: Thus those of the Church of Rome do commonly justify their forbidding the people to read the holy Scriptures, because they may be abused by ignorant

ignorant persons who may misunderstand the sense of them, and give room to erroneous and heretical Doctrines. There is as much danger that the Lord's Supper, and the Word of God, be abused and turned to the Condemnation of unworthy Receivers and ignorant Readers, as there is in the neglect of Godfathers and Godmother's undertakings: And yet our Dissenting Brethren would not have their people kept off both from the receiving the Sacrament and Reading the Bible.

But they may say, *That the abuse of these two things, the Sacrament, and the Word of God, is not so general as the abuse of that Order of having Sureties in the Baptism of Infants.*

I say again, that a more general abuse of a good Order, doth not make it worse in its self, nor more unlawful: It is granted, that if it be good in it self, that is enough to justify the lawfulness of it. But seeing no good at all comes by it, will they say, but on the contrary much evil, Is it not better to be without it? I deny that no good comes from this Order. I hope there are several good and pious persons who consider well the nature of their Undertakings, and make conscience to have them as well performed as lies in their power. I have known several Sureties who supplied the Parents defects, and by their good advices and cares, have not only undertaken the Education of those Children for whom they were Sureties, but have even succeeded well in their cares. I wish there were more

more such than there is: And 'tis certain that no good Christian should undertake it, but he should either see it performed, or perform it himself. It is not such a hard matter, the thing may easily be done: And as the Church doth require it, so the neglect of it is sinful. But the Church is not to be blamed for the prescribing of an Order which is good, and of great advantage when well performed. The Sin of those that neglect it lies at their own doors, and themselves are to answer for it, as the unworthy Receiver of the Lord's Supper, and the Misinterpreter of the holy Scripture; but not the Church, whose Orders are good and serviceable to the promoting of Religion and Piety amongst her members.

If our Dissenting Brethren were moved by a real motive of Christianity, instead of Separating from the Church upon such a slight account, they should rather help to remove this Objection, in giving good Examples to our people, and increasing the number of those who perform this Order well, and take a care to discharge their trust. God's glory and the interest of Religion should be much better promoted by such a charitable conduct, than by their Separation, and contempt of a good and useful custom and practise.

Lastly, I cannot but wonder to see how our Dissenting Brethren are apt to find fault where there is none; it seems they are cautious of the little ground they have for their Separation, therefore to make it a little more

more plausible and justifiable, they pick a quarrel with every thing that may bear the show of an Exception : Not considering that such mean objections are rather prejudicial to their Cause, than favourable ; and is it not very strange that a custome that hath been of so long standing in the Church, and of so great Antiquity, should on a sudden be disapproved in the late times of the Church, under a pretence that it is abused by many, or hath no Scripture-foundation ? And how doth it come to pass that the Reformers of the Church in all Countries did not see, as well as our Brethren, the vanity and superstition of this practice ? For it is to be observed that there is no Protestant Church abroad, neither among the *Lutherans*, nor among the *Calvinists*, but do all conform to this practice of Godfathers and Godmothers. And lest our Brethren Object, that perhaps the foreign Protestant Churches do not engage the Godfathers and Godmothers to make such promises for the Education of those Children ; I will prove the Contrary by the Publick form of that Sacrament, as it is used in all the *French* reformed Churches, and composed by *Calvin* himself. After the publick Exhortations and Prayers of the Minister, he puts this Question to the Godfathers and Godmothers, *Since this Infant is to be admitted into the Society of the Christian Church, do you promise, when he cometh to years* of

See the Lyr-
gury of the
French reformed Church
in the form
of Baptism.

of Discretion, to instruct him in the Doctrine received among the people of God, as it is, Summarily set down in the confession of faith which we have all, to wit, I believe in God the Father Almighty, &c. and so to the end of the Creed. To which they answer, *Yes*. Do you promise therefore to take care that this Infant may be instructed in all this Doctrine, and generally in all that is contained in the holy Scripture of both Old and New Testament, that he may receive it as the true Word of God come down from Heaven? Further you shall Exhort him to live according to the Rule that our Lord hath given us in his Law, which Summarily consists in these two points, to love God with all our Senses, our Hearts and our Strength, and our Neighbours as our Selves. Likewise according to the Admonitions he gave by his Prophets and Apostles; that this Child, denying himself and his own lusts, may dedicate and consecrate himself to glorify the name of God and of Christ, and edify his Neighbours. To all this, the Godfather's and Godmothers do answer, *Yes*. And though the Father most commonly is present, yet the question is not put to him but to the Godfathers and Godmothers, who alone enter into this solemn Engagement before God and his Church.

There is no essential difference between these two Engagements, that of our Lyturgy, and this of the French reformed Church. And I never heard of a Calvinist that made any Objection against these promises, though I lived a considerable while amongst them. Why then

then should our Dissenting Brethren here in *England*, who Extol so much the Reformation of *Calvin*, and take it to be much better than ours, except against a practise which is so exactly observed in the *Calvinist* Churches? If it had been altogether needless and Superstitious, it is not probable that this great enemy to all Ceremonies and superstitious Practises, would have kept this Order in his Church, if he had in the least thought of its Inutility, and even of its bordering upon Superstition.

I would not have insisted so long upon *Calvin's* Testimony, and the constant practise of his reformed Churches, were it not that our Dissenting Brethren lay a great stress upon their pretended Conformity with all other Protestant Churches abroad, and do pretend that the Church of *England* is very singular in her Reformation. It would be very easie to show how ill-grounded this pretence is. But this would bring me much beyond my purpose, however the case of Godfathers and Godmothers is an instance of their mistakes; the stinted Lyturgies and forms of Publick Prayers, and of the administration of both Sacraments, which are used in all Protestant Churches, are other Sufficient evidences of their mistakes.

And here I cannot pass by the unsincerity and little candor which Mr. *Quick*, a Presbyterian Minister hath shewed to the world. He hath published two Volumes in Folio of the History of the Reformation of the
Church

Church in France, there he giveth us an exact account of her Establishment, Laws, Priviledges, and Constitutions, of her discipline, Government, and Synodical Assemblies. But he hath not one word of her Lyrurgy and form of Worship, which was essential to his Undertaking, and had certainly been mentioned, had it not been a crossing of his main design, which was to make that Church as much like his own as possible. He was told of this mistake by a French Minister, to whom he shewed his Project before his Book was Printed; but he did not think fit to have it Redressed. Neither can it be said that it was not a wilful mistake; for before the Toleration, being acquainted with the French Tongue, he was a constant frequenter of the French Church in London, where this Lyrurgy and publick form of Prayers is dayly used in the same way and manner as it was in France, and as it is in Holland, and in all the Provinces and Cities of Germany, Hungary, Bohemia, Poland and other places, where the Calvinist Reformation is letted and observed. Let this Observation be made against those who declare themselves so great Enemies to stinted forms of Worship, though they pretend so much conformity with the Protestant Churches abroad. It is plain that they are as singular in this point, as in respect to their exception against the practice of Godfathers and Godmothers, which is generally followed by the same foreign Protestant Churches.

And now I have done with this Objection, and hope I have sufficiently made it appear, that this practice of our Church is no just cause of Separation. It is a good and useful Order, which, when well performed, is a great help to promote Christianity. It is not contrary to the Word of God, but agrees excellently well with this general Rule of Scripture, that every thing may be done to Edification. It is not made a Term of Communion, as being an Essential and Fundamental part of it; but it is only a good and laudable custom practiced in the Church very anciently, and even in all the Protestant Churches abroad. Therefore it is very Lawful and Commendable. And I wish that our Dissenting Brethren, who except against it because it is much abused, and who look upon themselves as better than others, would keep communion with us, that by their good Example they might help us against the abuse of it, and for the having it well performed.

Of the Crossing of Children in the Sacrament of Baptism.

THis practice of our Church is likewise disliked by the Dissenters, they make it a Term of our Communion, which they think to be an unlawful Imposition, Superstitious, and a Remains of Popery. Therefore they cannot in conscience Conform and Submit to it. I have several things to say to this.

1. If nothing else but this practice of our Church

Church was the occasion of our Brethren's Separation, though I take it to be very lawful and warrantable (as I intend to make it appear) yet I could wish that this stumbling block was removed out of their way, and that it was made indifferent to use or forbear it, according to the will and pleasure of those that are concerned in it; if it be that by this Condescension of our Church, we might hope to see Peace and Unity restored in this Nation. But till this be done, it is the Duty of us Ministers to make our people sensible how groundless the cause of Separation is upon this account.

2. I would have you to consider that this crossing of Children in their Baptism, is no Term of Communion, and it is misrepresented by the Dissenters in making it so. I grant the Ministers of our Church are obliged to conform to it and to practice it, but the people may choose whether they will give their consent and approbation to that Ceremony: And their mere presence at the doing it, doth not defile them, as I made it appear before in reference to those parcels of our Lyturgy which they think unlawful; nor make them guilty of sin, if there is any in doing of it. If it be said that the peoples consent is to be supposed as well as their presence, since they themselves do bring the Children to the place where this Ceremony is performed; I reply, They do not bring the Children to be crossed, but to be baptized; and our Dissenting Bre-

themselves own that that Sacrament is lawfully administered, notwithstanding this pretended Superstitious Ceremony. Therefore in procuring their Childrens Baptism, they do nothing, neither act of their Body, nor consent of their Will, towards the crossing of the Children, which they may look upon as they please, either as lawful or indifferent, or even superstitious, without any danger of any defilement by it in their own persons; neither can there be any defilement in their Children which are crossed, for as they are not capable of reason, so they are not capable to give their consent which is required to make a moral defilement; for I hope that our Dissenting Brethren will not believe that the sign of the cross made upon the forehead of children leaves an indelible Character upon the place where it is made, which defiles the Child for ever.

But they may say, That *the Sacrament it self is defiled by it*; I Answer, That if they thought so, then they should Re-baptize all those that go from us to them, for our Baptism being defiled cannot have its due effect, which is the Regeneration of those that are baptized; how can a corrupted and defiled Sacrament represent the washing away of sin and corruption? That is a plain contradiction. Therefore in not Rebaptizing those that have been baptized among us, they do own that our Baptism is good and not defiled. I confess the *Anabaptists* do Rebaptize those that go to them from us, but 'tis not for that reason, but because

cause they believe that Children are not to be baptized, but only Adults, and therefore they Rebaptize those that go to them from the *Presbyterians* and *Independants*, as well as those that are baptized in the Church of England. Thus it appeareth, that since the Sacrament is not defiled, nor the Godfathers nor the Godmothers, nor the Children themselves by that Ceremony of Crossing, it can never be a lawful cause in our Brethren to Separate from us upon that account.

3. I would have you to consider that the Crossing of Children is no part of the Sacrament, but only an appendice to it, and this is declared in the 30th. Canon of the Church which is much to be observed by all reasonable persons. *The Church of England, with the Canon, since the abolishing of Popery, hath ever held and taught, and so doth hold and teach still, that the Sign of the Cross used in Baptism is no part of the substance of that Sacrament. For when the Minister dipping the Infant in water, or laying water upon the face of it, hath pronounced these words, I baptize thee, &c. The Infant is fully and perfectly baptized; so as the sign of the Cross being afterwards used, doth neither add any thing to the vertue and perfection of Baptism, nor being omitted doth detract any thing from the effect and substance of it.*

I think this declaration of our Canon is a full evidence that this Ceremony is no part of the Sacrament. For no body ought to give another sense and interpretation to the

Church's practice and ceremonies, than what she gives her self in her Canons and Rubricks; and whosoever will deal honestly and justly, but especially in the Spirit of Christianity, will never impute to the Church a Doctrine, which she openly disowns, and declareth against.

Besides, pray will you observe this Order of our Church, which is another evidence and plain Proof, that this Ceremony cannot be looked upon as a part of the Sacrament. And that is, that the Minister is directed not to sign the Infant with the sign of the Cross, when there is any likeness of its Death in the State of Infancy, which should not be omitted if it was Essential to the Sacrament, or any Part of it: Therefore the omitting of it proves evidently, that the Church takes it to be needless, when the Infant dyeth before it comes of Age, to profess that he is not ashamed of Christ Crucified.

4. As this Ceremony is no part of the Sacrament, so neither the Church pretends that this sign of the Cross hath any Power or Vertue in its self, as those of the Church of Rome do pretend; nor that it drives away the Devil, and makes the efficacy of that Sacrament more easie and strong; there is no such Doctrine amongst us as the same Canon declares. *It is apparent in the Communion Book, that the Infant is, by Vertue of Baptism, before it be signed with the sign of the Cross, received into the Congregation of Christs Flock, as a perfect Member*

Member thereof, and not by any Power ascribed unto the Sign of the Cross.

If the Dissenters oppose to this, Why then is that Ceremony observed, since it is no part of the Sacrament, and hath neither Virtue nor Efficacy? What is it good for? Or since it is good for nothing, is it not much better to forbear it, than to give an occasion of offence in observing it?

The same Canon doth answer for me, saying, that it is observed as a Remembrance of the Cross, which is very Precious to all them that rightly believe in Jesus Christ, accounting it a lawful outward Ceremony and Honourable Badge, whereby the Infant is dedicated to the Service of him that dyed upon the Cross. This is the very end and purpose of this Ceremony, that by it all Christians should be put in Remembrance of their Saviour upon the Cross, that they should not be ashamed to own their Lord and Master who was Crucified for their Souls; therefore you see that this Ceremony is not needless but very serviceable, to create in the Minds of Christians a Remembrance of the Cross of Christ, which is very useful and profitable.

Neither can this be looked on as a superfluous addition of the Church of Rome, but as a constant practice of the most ancient and purest times of the Church, as the abovesentioned Canon declares. I will set down the Words of the Canon in that particular, in behalf of those who have not the conveniency to Read

It in the Book it self: Thus it is said, The Honour and Dignity of the Name of the Cross, begot a reverend Estimation even in the Apostles times (for ought that is known to the contrary) of the sign of the Cross, which the Christians shortly after used in all their Actions, thereby making an outward shew of Profession, even to the astonishment of the Jews, that they were not ashamed to acknowledge him for their Lord and Saviour, who dyed for them upon the Cross. And this sign they did not only use themselves with a kind of Glory, when they met with any Jews, but signed therewith their Children, when they were Christned, to Dedicate them by that Badge to his Service.

This use of the sign of the Cross in Baptism, was held in the Primitive Church as well by the Greeks as Latines, with one consent and great applause. At what time if any had opposed himself against it, they would certainly have been censured as Enemies of the name of the Cross, and consequently of Christ's Merits, the sign whereof they could no better endure, this continual and general use of the Cross, is evident by many Testimonies of the Ancient Fathers. Thus it is expressed in the Canon, which makes evidently appear the Antiquity of this Practice in the purest Ages of the Church: And in effect,

Advers. Deme-
H. A. 203. de
unit. Eccles.
p. 185. de laps.
p. 169.

St. Cyprian saith often enough, that being Regenerated, that is, Baptized, they were signed with the sign of Christ, that they were signed on their Foreheads, who were thought worthy to be admitted into the Fellowship of our Lord's Religion,

St.

St. Basil puts it plainly amongst those Ancient Customs of the Church, which had been derived from the Apostles. *Tertullian* assures us that they used it in the most common actions of Life, that upon every Motion at their going out and coming in, at their going to Bath, or to Bed, or to Meals, or whatever their occasions called them to, they were to make the sign of the Cross on their Foreheads. And therefore 'tis no wonder that they should never omit it in the most solemn act of their being initiated into the Christian Faith. Observe that *Tertullian* Liv'd in the Second Century of the Church, *St. Cyprian* in the third, and *St. Basil* in the fourth, these are ancient Authorities, which are sufficient Evidences that our Church holds the Practice of it from the best Antiquity, and not from the Church of Rome.

Basil. de Spir. S. c. 27.

Tertul. de Coron. mil. c. 3.

I grant that Church hath much abused it, and turned the sign of the Cross to a great many superstitious uses: But as the Canon declares, *The abuse of a thing doth not take away the Lawful use of it.* And it is declar'd in the same place, that *the use of the sign in Baptism, was ever accompanied here with such sufficient cautions and exceptions, against all Popish Superstition and Error, as in the like cases are either fit or convenient.*

Whosoever hath a mind to be better satisfied in this Point, and thinks all these

Reasons

Reasons not sufficient to justify this practice of our Church from all superstitious and Popish abuses, may peruse an excellent discourse Written by one of the London Divines, the Title whereof is, *The Resolution of this Case of Conscience, Whether the Church of England Symbolizing so far as it doth with the Church of Rome, makes it unlawful to hold Communion with the Church of England.*

And now in summing up all these Answers to the Objection and Reasons of our Practice in this respect, which I think to be very satisfactory, I will put this question to our Dissenting Brethren: Considering that the sign of the Cross in our Baptism is no term of our Communion, since the consent and approbation of the People is not required in it; that our Church declareth that it is no Essential part of the Sacrament, and that no intrinseck Power or Vertue is attributed to it; that the meaning of the Church by that Ceremony, is only to declare that the Remembrance of the Cross of Christ is Precious to Christians, who by their Baptism enter into the Service of Jesus Christ Crucified for them; that it is used in our church, in the same Spirit that the whole Christian Church used it in its best and purest Ages; and that the Church of England declares her Abhorrence and Renunciation, of all the superstitious abuses of it in the Church of Rome. I ask, considering all these reasons and sincere declarations of our Church, whether the sign of the Cross

in Baptism can still be a just cause for any to separate from our Church, and Run the Hazard of falling into the Sin of Schism? And whether our Dissenting Brethren do not more directly act against the Word of God, which recommends unto us Peace, Unity, and Concord, of which their Separation is a visible breach, than we Members of the Church of England, in suffering our Children to receive the Sign of the Cross in their Baptism? I am sure St. Paul said, not only that he was not ashamed of the Cross of Christ, but even that he Gloried in it. It is not very likely that he would have bidden the Faithful to Separate from the Christian Church, which Teacheth her Children to do as much as he did.

I do verily believe that those Persons, who will not be convinced by such Reasons, are horribly prejudiced against our Church, and are great Lovers of Separation and Division; I wish they were sensible of that great Charge which St. Paul gave to the Colossians and to all Christians, *Love all things, faith he, put on Charity, which is the Bond of Perfection, 3. ch. 14. v. and let the Peace of God Rule in your Hearts, to the which also ye are called in one Body.*

Of kneeling at the Receiving the Sacrament of God: or the Lord's Supper.

NOW we are come to the last and main Objection of our Dissenting Brethren? And whereas

whereas they lay a great stress upon this pretended cause of their Separation, I think it needful to insist something longer upon it, to Examine their chief Exceptions against it, and give sufficient Answer to those Exceptions; which I divide into three Classes. They say,

I. *That kneeling at the Sacrament is unlawful, because it is imposed as a Term of Communion absolutely necessary, which is contrary to the liberty of Christians, the Word of God prescribing nothing like it.*

II. *That that Practice is in it self Superstitious and Idolatrous.*

III. *That sitting at the Sacrament is more conform to our Saviour's Institution, and more like a Table Gesture, which was that of Christ at that time.*

As to the first, which is, that kneeling at the Sacrament is unlawful, because it is imposed as a Term of Communion absolutely necessary, which is contrary to the Liberty of Christians, the Word of God prescribing nothing like it.

I answer, There is a great difference to be observed betwixt things that are commanded or forbidden in Scripture, and things that are indifferent in themselves. The Essentials of Religion both in reference to Doctrine and Worship, are grounded upon Divine Authority, and no Humane Power ought to make any Addition or Diminution to those Essentials; or whosoever will take upon himself to impose either any Doctrine or Essential Worship,

Worship, which hath no Divine Authority, doth really act against the Christian Liberty, and imposeth a Term of Communion which is unlawful, and no Body is obliged to submit to such Terms and Impositions. This is the Doctrine of the Church of *England*, and therefore she condemns the Church of *Rome*, for imposing such Doctrines and Essential Worships, absolutely necessary to believe and practice, which not only have no Scripture Authority, but even are contradicted by it; as the Doctrines of Purgatory, and Corporal Presence of our Saviour in the Sacrament; the Worshipping and Serving of Images, and the directing prayers to Angels and departed Souls. These and such other false Doctrines and Worships, which are prescribed to the Faith and Practice of Men, are made Essential terms of Religion, and therefore unlawful, having no foundation in the Word of God: But as to the outward Manners and Circumstances of Divine Worship, as there is no particular Command, nor particular Prohibition in Scripture, but only a general Rule, that every thing in the Church may be done in *Order, Decency, and to Edification*, we say that they are indifferent in themselves, and become necessary, only as they are appointed by the Governors of the Church, for the observing that general Rule, *Order, Decency, and Edification*; and the Obligation to submit therunto, is only to prevent disorder and confusion in
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the Church. Now kneeling at the receiving of the Sacrament, is one of those outward circumstances of the Divine Worship, which are indifferent in themselves, and which are neither commanded nor prohibited in Scripture: But it is one of the Ordinances of the Superiors of the Church, which are no further necessary, than as they are related to the *Order, Decency and Edification*, generally prescribed in Scripture. And the Members of the Church are obliged to submit unto this Ordinance, by Vertue of this general Command, That we must obey our Superiors in all things that are lawful: So that those things, tho they are indifferent in themselves, become necessary for the same reasons, and not otherwise.

I think our Dissenting Brethren cannot deny this, unless they be for disorders and confusions in the Church. And they themselves do observe several outward circumstances in their Worship, which are not prescribed in Scripture, and which they have established for order sake. Thus the custom of sitting at the Sacrament, which they observe, is no more commanded in Scripture, than kneeling; and yet their Members do submit to it, and they think they are obliged to conform to that Ordinance. Nay, they would look upon any of them to be turbulent and troublesome Persons, who would undertake to disturb the Peace and Quietness of their Societies, by refusing their Compliance and Conformity

Conformity to this order. Why then should not the Church of England have the same liberty to order such a outward circumstance of gesture in the Sacrament, as our Brethren challenge unto themselves? Is there not as much reason for us as for themselves? And why should our custom of Kneeling be made more a Term of Communion, Then their's of Sitting? For it appears plainly enough, that Sitting at the receiving of the Sacrament, is as much imposed on their Members, as Kneeling is on ours. Therefore one is as much a Term of Communion, as the other. Indeed if our Separatists could prove that Kneeling is forbidden in Scripture, either in express Words, or by consequence, then it would be an unlawful imposition, which might justify a Separation much better: But as long as this cannot be proved, they will never be able to justify their Separation in that respect.

Therefore I say that gesture of Kneeling is lawful, because it is not imposed as being a particular Command of God, absolutely necessary to Salvation, but as an outward circumstance of Worship, which is left to the Church to determine as she thinks fit, for the Edification of her Members: And the Church having the full Liberty to prescribe such outward Manner of Worship, hath thought convenient to ordain that Gesture of Kneeling, as being most agreeing with that most sacred part of our Worship; therefore

fore no Members of the Church can deny their compliance with this Order, without being guilty of disturbing the peace of the Church, and even of disobedience to that general command of God, Submission to our lawful Superiors.

If the Dissenters say again, *That the Church hath no power to prescribe any thing that is not commanded in the Scripture; that gesture being not commanded, the Church hath not power to impose it.* I Answer, what I have said before, That the Church hath not power to impose any articles of Faith, nor any Essentials of Religion, but what can be plainly proved from Scripture, we agree with our Dissenting Brethren in that respect: And therefore we and they think our Separation from the Church of Rome very lawful, because she imposeth upon her members such Articles of Faith, and such Fundamental Terms of Religion, as have no Scripture-Authority. But we deny that this Gesture in the Sacrament, and all the other practises of our Church which are disliked by our Brethren, are imposed as Articles of Faith, or essential and Fundamental Terms of Religion: But we declare that they are only circumstances which the Church hath power to impose for the sake of Order, Peace and Uniformity in the Divine Worship. Let them prove, if they can, that kneeling at the Sacrament is one of the Essentials of Religion, and that the Church hath not so much power given her as to prescribe any outward

ward manner of Worship; which is not contradicted either in express words, or by consequence in the Scripture, and then we shall give up the cause: But till that be done, we have great reason to hold and declare to all the world that their Separation is very unlawful and Schismatical, and their non-compliance with this Ordinance a Rebellion against the lawful power. I hope this answer will give a full Satisfaction to their first Exception against our practice of kneeling at the receiving of the Sacrament. Now to the second point.

II. The Dissenters say, that *kneeling at the receiving of the Sacrament is unlawful, because it is Superstitious and Idolatrous*; this is a terrible accusation against the Church of England, which hath very great influence upon the common sort of people, who having their heads full of other prejudices against our Church, are mightily pleased to hear their Teachers entertain them with such black and slanderous Exceptions. The meer saying of this, goeth a great way with them, and they will never trouble themselves to enquire into the truth of it, nor to look for proofs, because they are pleased that it may be so. They are told of it (as they think) by persons of great veneration and abilities, and therefore it must be true without any further enquiry. If this was as easily proved, as it is affirmed by our Separatists, then indeed the Church of England would be guilty of a great sin, and de-

serve to be forsaken by all good Christians; but God be thanked, hitherto we have never seen any proof of such a slanderous accusation, and I am confident never shall.

I crave from those for whom I write these lines, that they would divest themselves of all prejudices, and suspend, for a while, their own opinions; that they may judge impartially of the Reasons which I have to offer against this Exception.

I. If this Proposition be true, *Kneeling at the Sacrament is Superstitious and Idolatrous*; then all those that receive that Sacrament in the same posture, are guilty of Superstition and Idolatry. This is a consequence that cannot be denied. And here is another, which is as true, Then all the Dissenters who have ever received the Sacrament according to the custom of the Church of *England*, are guilty of the Sin of Superstition and Idolatry. I would fain ask of our Dissenting Brethren, who have received the Sacrament with us, whether they have at any time owned or acknowledged those great sins before God, making an humble confession of them, and begging God's pardon for them? Did ever any Dissenting Minister put that Question unto those that go from our Church to them, and are willing to be admitted unto their Sacrament, Whether they have received it kneeling? And if they say they have, did they make them sensible of those horrid sins, and exhort them to a sincere

sincere abhorrence and detestation of them, as being destructive to a state of salvation? If their Ministers have not done this, and think our practise to be Superstitious and Idolatrous, I say, they have not performed their Pastoral office, and have been deficient even in one of the most necessary points, which is to make their people aware of these great sins: But besides, how can this be reconciled with their occasional Sacrament? They say, as I have mentioned before, that they do not altogether separate from us, but to keep Peace and Unity they now and then joyn with us, and even communicate with us in the Sacrament. But how can they do that without being superstitious, and Idolaters, if to receive the Sacrament kneeling doth make us guilty of those heinous sins? can they expect to be free from them, because they communicate but now and then; and that it is the only constant and continued practise of it, which makes it sinful and Idolatrous? When the Apostle bids us *flee from Idolatry*, 1 Cor. 10. 14. was his meaning that we should flee from it sometimes but not always? Not when we had some worldly and temporal reason to abide with it, and fall into the Commission of it? According to this Principle, those poor *Martyrs* of the first Ages of the Church, were great fools to suffer death, rather than offer incense but once to the Idols of the *Heathens*; It was not to qualifie them for some Preferments in the Government, but it was to save even their

lives that it was imposed upon them, to commit one single Act of Idolatry; and yet they would not do it, and suffered the loss of their lives for the refusing of it and our Dissenting Brethren are willing enough to fall into that horrid sin, if they can but enjoy some place in the publick Administration of Affairs; and they are well pleased that this Priviledge is kept and preserved to them, as they have openly testified it upon the rejection of that Bill which was brought unto the house of Lords against it. And yet according to their Principles, 'tis but a Priviledge of committing Idolatry. Good Lord! what complication of sins there is both in their opinion and practice! If kneeling at the Sacrament is an Idolatrous practise, then those of their Members who receive it so, are Idolatrous, nay they are Hypocrites; for they do it without any sense of Religion, and for other ends and purposes than that of Religion. And they are likewise prophaners of the most holy things, since they make them serve to their worldly and temporal affairs. Idolatry, Hypocrisy and prophanation of the holy Sacrament, are the sins that naturally proceed from their occasional Sacrament, and from their Principle that kneeling at it is Idolatrous. The Conscience of our Brethren must needs be very large, and their Religion very easy, which if it doth agree very well with their temporal interests, differs much from their pretended severity of Morals. For they will

will tell us sometimes that they separate from us, because prophane and vicious persons are suffered and admitted to our Communion, even to the holy Sacrament; and now on the other side, they are content to receive the Sacrament now and then with us Kneeling, tho that Posture is Idolatrous. 'Tis a hard matter to reconcile, such contradictory Principles and Practises together: I do verily believe, if there was not something besides real Piety and true Religion, in those Opinions and Practises, they could never abide together in the same Society.

It may be the Moderate Dissenters, go not so far as to accuse our Church of Idolatry, but they are contented to say, that *this Gesture of Kneeling is Superstitious*. But if we examine the meaning of that Word *Superstition*, we shall see that in the sense of the Dissenters, it can signifie nothing else but flat Idolatry: I will give you the several interpretations of that Word, as it is used either in Scripture, or in Authors, both Christian and Heathen; and then you will see, that there can be no difference between Superstition and Idolatry, according to the sense that our Brethren give of that Word.

1. It appeareth to me that those who Worshipped the Devil, or Angels, or the Souls of Dead Men, were called superstitious by the Heathens; and the word *Superstition*, which is in the Greek Language, *δωσιδωρασια* signifies properly the Worship of *Demons* which is

1. Idolatry, and the Christians used the same word to express Idolatry. *St. Austin* De doctrina Christi. lib. 2. saith, *Superstition is the Worshipping a Creature as God, or any part of a Creature*; indeed some of the Protestants Writing against the Papists, mean by Idolatry the Worship of Images, and by Superstition Worship and Prayers to Saints departed: But I think one is as much Idolatry as the other; and if we are superstitious because we Kneel at the Sacrament which is but Bread and Wine, this should rather be related to the Worship of Images which is called Idolatry, than to the Prayers of the Saints, which they call Superstition; the Bread and Wine in the Sacrament being an Image and representation of Christ. When *St. Paul* said to the *Athenians*, *That he perceived that in all things they were too Superstitious*, *Act. 17. 22.* His meaning was either, that the *Athenians* Worshipped more Gods or Dæmons than the *Romans*, or any other Heathen People, as *Dr. Hammond* expounds this place, or that they were in general too much addicted to Worship an unknown Deity: And that they should rather apply themselves to know the true God, whom alone they should Worship; this interpretation seems to agree better with the following Words of *St. Paul*, v. 23. mentioning the Inscription upon one of their Altars, *To the unknown God*. But from both those interpretations, it appears plainly, that *St. Paul* using that word *Superstition* he

he meaneth as much as this, that the *Athenians* were too much given to Idolatry.

2. The word *Superstition* is also used by Ancient Writers, to signifie all sorts of Religion, good and bad: Thus in the Book of the *Acts*, *Festus* or St. *Luke* in his History saith, that St. *Paul* was accused before *Festus*, concerning his own *Superstition*. That is, concerning his own Religion: And among the Heathens, when the *Atheists* speak of any Religion, they call it *Superstition*, and so the Greek Word *σεσιδαμωσια* is rendred indifferently by those two Words *Supersticio* and *Religio*, as it is to be seen in the old Greek and Latin Lexicon, found at the end of *Cyrills Works*.

3. It appeareth likewise that this Word *Superstition*, is used to express the Religion of those who Worshipped God out of Fear and Dread. Thus *Maximus Tyrius* having compared a Pious Man to a Friend, and a Superstitious, to a Flatterer, Explains the meaning of the Greek Word, *σεσιδαμωσια* in these Words: The Pious Man comes to God without Fear, the Superstitious with much Fear; Dreading the Gods as so many Tyrants. According to which Notion St. *Austin* is affirmed to say, *Deum religioso veneri a Superstitioso timeri*; the Religious Man reveres God, the Superstitious is afraid of him: And it seems that *Epicurus's* Philosophy gave birth to this explication of this Word: For, as he was willing, saith Dr. *Hammond*, to rid God of the Trouble of a Providence, or care of Humane Affairs, resolved that

all things were done naturalibus ponderibus et motibus, and consequently that Men were to revere God and adore him, for his greatness, and excellency, and beatitude, and immortality and transcendent Beauty, but not to fear, or dread, or be afraid of him. Therefore all those that believed a Providence, Rewards and Punishments after this Life, that Philosopher called them Superstitious, or Fearers of a Deity. *Plutarch* is in the same Opinion, as may be seen in his Tract *de Superstitione*, where he saith that it is the Religion of those, who have full apprehensions of the Gods, or are awed with some frightful Doctrines, looking on the Gods as so many Furies or Sprights, conceiving them to be Cruel Minded, and other such things; this is what he calls Superstition.

4. And lastly that Word was also used to express all Magical Arts and Sciences, Spells, Ligatures, Characters, &c. The observation of auspicious and ominous days, the Books of *Augurs*, the flight of Birds, and such other things, are called Superstitious, which any Body may find in *St. Austin de doctrina Christiana*, lib. 2. under the Title of *significationes superstitiosæ*, *Epist. 73. ad servandum demonibus adhibenter*, are used to serve the Devils, and they that use them, he calls *Superstitious Observers of Times*.

These are only Senses and Explications of that Word *Superstition*, which can be found in Antiquity; Now if any of these senses can be attributed unto the Church of England, for
Kneeling

Kneeling at the Sacrament, it must be the first as if we were Worshipping and Serving the Bread and Wine of that Sacrament, instead of Christ; the which if we do, we are as much Idolaters as Superstitious, since, as I made it appear, the Word *Superstition* in that sense signifies also Idolatry. The Second Sense of that Word, which is the profession of any Religion, either good or bad, cannot be given to our practice of Kneeling at the Sacrament, no more than to any other Religious Worship of what Religion soever. In the Third sense we cannot be called more Superstitious than the Dissenters, since they believe a Providence and a Judgment to come, as well as we, and profess to be as much afraid of offending God, as we are. Lastly, those that used any Magical Arts or Sciences, observers of Days and Starrs, of flying of Birds, and such other ominous Signs were called Superstitious, I hope our Brethren will not accuse our Church of any Magical Contract, and devilish Engagements, for Kneeling at the Sacrament. Therefore I conclude from all this, that if our practice of Kneeling is Superstitious, it is also Idolatrous: And let our Brethren pretend as much as they please, to Moderation in their Accusation, if they charge our Church with a Superstitious Practice, their meaning must be also that it is Idolatrous. My business therefore at this time is, to justify our Church from this odious Charge, and prove, that this Practice

Practice of Kneeling at the Sacrament, is neither Superstitious nor Idolatrous.

If Kneeling at the Receiving of the Sacrament, *is Superstitious and Idolatrous*, it must be in these four respects, or in some or one of them.

1. It must be so in its own Nature, or in its self, as it is an Act of Kneeling.

2. Or it must be so in respect to the Sacrament, because it is Kneeling at the receiving of the Sacrament.

3. Or it must be so in regard of its being Imposed by the Church.

4. And lastly, or because it is abused by the Papists, who have turned it to Superstitious and Idolatrous Worship.

I cannot imagine any other Reasons, why this Gesture should get the Denomination of Superstition and Idolatry; so that if I can justify it in these four respects, as I hope I shall, then it will appear plainly, not only that our Brethren are very unjust in their Slanderous Accusation, but also that their Separation in that respect is both Unlawful and Sinful.

1. That Kneeling can be neither Superstitious nor Idolatrous, in it self, or in its own Nature, our Brethren I suppose will grant. For they use it as well as we in other respects, as at Prayer, they look upon that Gesture as being in its self indifferent, therefore it is needless to insist any longer upon that first respect.

2. As to the Second, which is, *Whether kneeling is Superstitious and Idolatrous, because it is kneeling*

kneeling at the receiving of the Sacrament; I say that this cannot make this gesture to be Superstitious and Idolatrous. For though the Sacrament is the occasion of our kneeling, yet it is not the Object whereunto we direct that worship. We know that the Sacrament is but Bread and Wine, dedicated by the Minister to be a Representation of the Body and Blood of Christ, but yet no Object of Worship and Adoration. If our Dissenting Brethren were not hugely prepossessed against our Church, and would not remain obstinate in their prejudices, they might be satisfied with the Church's declaration in that respect, which is so express against all Superstition and Idolatry. I will set down here the words that are to be seen in the Communion service. Whereas it is ordained in this Office for the Administration of the Lord's Supper, that the Communicants should receive the same kneeling, (which Order is well meant for a signification of our humble and grateful acknowledgements of the benefits of Christ, therein given to all worthy receivers, and for the avoiding of all such profanation and disorder in the holy Communion as might otherwise ensue) yet lest the same kneeling should by any persons either out of ignorance and infirmity, or out of malice and obstinacy, be misconstrued and depraved, it is here declared that thereby no adoration is intended, or ought to be done, either unto the Sacramental Bread and Wine there Bodily received, or unto any Corporal presence of Christ's natural Flesh and Blood.

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the Sacramental Bread and Wine remain still in their very natural substances, and therefore may not be adored (for that were Idolatry to be abhorred of all faithful Christians), and the natural Body and Blood of our Saviour Christ are in Heaven and not here: it being against the truth of Christ's natural Body to be at one time in more places then one. I think this declaration of our Church should be very satisfactory, and all reasonable persons might very well be content with it, without any further Apology for the clearing of this Gesture from any Superstitious or Idolatrous action; but for a better conviction of such as cannot be so easily brought to reason, I will add some more Observations. When we Communicate we make a solemn Commemoration of Gods infinite mercies in delivering up his Son unto Death for our Sins, If the remembrance of such an infinite benefit ought to be precious to us, are we guilty of Superstition and Idolatry because we perform it in a posture which we think the fittest to express our most humble gratitude to God Almighty, who is the Author of this inestimable grace? Our Brethren will not deny that there is no act of Divine worship where more due preparation is required then for receiving the Sacrament. And why the act it self should not be also performed with the deepest reverence, and the lowest Expression of Devotion both in Body and Soul, I cannot conceive? Neither can I see how we are Superstitious in kneeling

ling when we receive the Sacrament, and not so when we pray, though both are acts of Worship, Devotion and Adoration directed to the supream God? Nay, which is much to be considered, there is no good Christian who receives the holy Sacrament but is actually praying at that time; and he hath more reason to pray in that instant then ever, that God may grant him the grace which is represented by the outward Elements of Bread and Wine. He thereby renews his Covenant with God, he receives the Seal of the Love of God, of his Peace and Reconciliation, which God is pleased to grant unto him, his Soul is altogether fixed upon God and his Saviour; and he is in that very instant made partaker of the Body and Blood of Christ. Therefore far from being Superstitious or Idolatrous, to be in that moment in the most humble and most devout posture that a man can be, such as kneeling is. I think it not only improper, but even indecent to receive in any other gesture. 'Tis coldness in devotion to pray sitting, as many ungodly persons do; I think it a greater indevotion to sit when we both pray and receive the Holy Sacrament.

Besides, if in kneeling our Worship was directed to the Bread and Wine, then indeed we should Worship the Creature instead of the Creator, which would be flat Idolatry: But we declare the contrary, and that God Almighty is the only Being we adore and
Worship,

Worship, and no act of divine Service is directed to those outward Elements; why then should not our Church be believed in her Declaration? And who can tell better then her self, what is the Object of her Worship? But they say you have Bread and Wine before you, and to those you Kneel. Yes, we have the Bread and Wine before us, we grant, but I deny that we Kneel to them; because you have a Bible before you, when you Kneel at Prayers, shall I believe that you Kneel to the Bible? There is as much Superstition and Idolatry in the one, as in the other. But if the Bread and the Wine were not there, you would not Kneel, therefore you Kneel to the Bread and Wine; I deny that Consequence. The Bread and Wine may be the occasion of my Kneeling then, but it is false, that I Kneel to them as to the Object of my Worship: Thus a Minister Reading Prayers in the Church, may be the occasion of the People's Kneeling, but he is not the Object to whom the People Kneel, though they Kneel before him.

To conclude this Head, By what hath been said, it appeareth plainly, that Kneeling in receiving the Sacrament, can never be Superstitious nor Idolatrous, since in that action we do nothing else but Prostrate our selves, in the deepest Humility of both Soul and Body before God, whom we Worship and adore, in giving him the most Humble Tokens of our Gratitude, for the infinite Benefit,

Benefit, we are made Partakers of in that Sacrament, and in pouring out our Addresses to him, that he may grant us the inward and outward Spiritual Graces, represented unto us under the outward Elements of Bread and Wine. Further I think it a great fault in our Brethren, to blame us because we express more Humility and Devotion, in the most considerable part of our Divine Service, than they do. Nay, they are still much more to be blamed that they will Separate from us, because our Service is more Humble and Devout than theirs. If their Separation be Sinful (as I am thoroughly convinced it is) this must needs make their Sin of a deeper Dye, and slandering of our Church so unjustly, shall not much help them out of the Guilt of it.

3 *Whether Kneeling at the Sacrament can be Superstitious and Idolatrous, because 'tis imposed by the Church.*

I have already examined this, being the first exception of the Dissenters against Kneeling: And I have sufficiently answered all the objections they can form in that respect, and I have made it appear, that the Superiors have Power to establish the outward Manner of Worship; and whatsoever is indifferent in its self, that is, which is neither Commanded or Forbidden by the Word of God, and which is no Article of Faith, nor Essential to Religion, the Church may Lawfully prescribe; by Vertue of that general Rule of St. Paul, That every thing may be done

done in the Church, *in Order, Decently, and to Edification.* Kneeling at the Sacrament, being, one of those outward Circumstances, which are not forbidden in the Scripture, and being neither Superstitious nor Idolatrous in it self, as I have proved before: The Superiors of the Church have the Power to impose it, and the Members of it are obliged to submit unto this order, without any Danger of Superstition and Idolatry; and none can refuse their compliance, without incurring the Sin of Rebellion and Contumacy.

4. And Lastly, *Whether Kneeling at the receiving the Sacrament, can be Superstitious and Idolatrous, because it is abused by those of the Church of Rome, who turned it to Superstition and Idolatry?* In reference unto this particular, I declare that I shall Write but little of mine own, because it hath been done already to my Hands by eminent Men, especially in one of the *London Divines Cases*, entituled *the Case of Kneeling, at the Holy Sacrament stated and resolved.* And in the Resolution of this Case of Conscience, *Whether the Church of England, Symbolizing so far as it doth with the Church of Rome, makes it unlawful to hold Communion with the Church of England?*

I should content my self, to refer my Reader unto these excellent Treatises, in reference to this Question, was it not that those for whom I write now, are not much acquainted with Books, wherefore I will set down here some of the Answers, which those
eminent

eminent Authors have given unto the same Question.

This Query now under our Examination is formed in this Manner; in the Case of Kneeling, *Whether it be unlawful for us to receive Kneeling, because this Posture was first introduced by Idolaters, and is still notoriously abused by the Papists to Idolatrous ends and purposes?*

I shall not insist on the Arguments that are made use of in this Case, to prove that Kneeling at the Sacrament was in use, in the first and purest Ages of the Church, before ever the doctrines of Corporal Presence and Transubstantiation were received in the Church, which gave Birth to the Idolatries of the Church of Rome; this would bring me too far; but whosoever will be at the pains to Read this *Case of Kneeling*, will find a full satisfaction in that point: That it is uncontestably true, that Kneeling at the Sacrament was used several Ages before the doctrines of corporal presence and Transubstantiation were received in the Church. Therefore if my Reader will grant me so much without any further trouble, this part of the Query is already answered. *Whether it be lawful to receive Kneeling, because this Gesture was first introduced by Idolaters:* For if it is true that this Gesture was observed in the Church, in her first and purest Ages, before the false doctrines of corporal presence and Transubstantiation were received, then

it was not introduced by Idolaters; except our Dissenting Brethren would affirm the Church to be Idolatrous, in her first and purest Antiquity.

I have one thing more to crave from my Readers, that I may avoid the trouble of Writing much, since it is done already, and they may find it in the same *Case*, and that is, that they would grant me the matter of fact, that since those Doctrines of Corporal Presence and Transubstantiation, are crept into the Church of *Rome*, whereby that Church is become Guilty of Idolatry, it cannot be made appear, that that Church made any Decree to prescribe Kneeling at the Receiving of the Sacrament. Indeed, it appeareth that Kneeling was prescribed at the Elevation of the Host, and at the meeting of it in the Streets, when it is carryed to sick Persons, but never in the Act of receiving. Therefore it cannot be said justly and truly, that this custom of Kneeling at the Sacrament was introduced by Idolaters: Nay, it appeareth plainly in the above mentioned *Case*, that the *Pope* himself, and the Priests saying Mass, do not Kneel when they receive. The *Pope* receiving sitting upon his Throne, and the Priests standing before the Altar: So that we might have as much reason to say to our Brethren, that their practice of sitting is an Idolatrous practice, since it is the same, that the *Pope* himself observeth.

I shall say no more in relation to this first part

part of the Query, referring my Readers to the strong Arguments and solid Reasons, which are to be seen in the said Cases of the London Divines. But I will content my self, to make some Extracts out of the same Book, in relation to the latter part of this Query, which is, *Whether it is lawful to receive Kneeling, because it is abused by the Papists, to idolatrous ends and purposes?*

My Author holds the affirmative and gives the following reasons of his Assertion.

1. 'In general, no abuse of Query 3. p. 46.
'any Gesture, tho' it be in the
'most manifest Idolatry, doth render that
'Gesture simply Evil, and for ever after un-
'lawful to be used in the Worship of God
'upon that account: For the abuse of a thing
'supposes the lawful use of it, and if any
'thing, otherwise lawful, becomes sinful by
'the abuse of it, then it is plain that it is
'not in its own Nature sinful, but by acci-
'dent, and with respect to somewhat else.
'This is clear from Scripture; for if Rites
'and Ceremonies, after they have been used
'by Idolaters, become absolutely Evil, and
'Unlawful to be used at all, then the Jews
'sinned in offering Sacrifice, erecting Altars,
'burning incense to the God of Heaven, &c.
'and observing other things and Rites, which
'the Heathens observed in the Worship of
'their false Gods.

'No, (say the Dissenters) *We except all
'such Rites as were commanded, or approved by*

God, and such are all those before mentioned. But say it's a silly Exception, and avails nothing; for if the abuse of a thing to Idolatry, makes it absolutely sinful and unlawful to be used at all, then it is impossible to destroy that relation; and what hath been once abused must remain so. That is, an infinite Power cannot undo what hath been done and clear it from ever having been once abused; And therefore I conclude, from the Command and Approbation of God, that a bare Conformity with Idolaters, using those Rites in the Worship of the true God, which they practice in the Worship of Idols, is not simply sinful, or formal Idolatry. For if it had, God had obliged the Children of Israel to commit Sin, and to do what he strictly and severely prohibited in other places; in Truth, such a Position would plainly make God the Author of Sin.

2. 'This Position (saith my Author) That the Idolatrous abuse of any thing, renders the use of it sinful to all that know it, is attended with very Mischievous Consequences and Effects.

1. 'It entrenches greatly on Man's Liberty, as dear to our Dissenting Brethren, as the Apple of their Eyes: And I wonder they are not sensible of it. At other times they affirm that no Earthly Power can rightly restrain the use of those things, which God hath left free and indifferent, and that those things which are otherwise are law-
ful,

ful, become sinful when imposed and enjoined by lawful Authority: And yet these very Men give that Power to Strangers both Heathens and Papists, which they take away from their rightful Princes and lawful Superiors; an Idolater may yoke them, when a Protestant Prince must not touch them; and what more heavy and intolerable Yoke can be clapt on our Necks, than this, that another Man's abuse of any thing to Idolatry, though in its own nature indifferent, and left free by God, renders the use of it sinful; Whether that be not a Violation of Christian Liberty, let St. Paul determine, who tells that *to the pure all things are pure*, 1 Cor. 10. 25. 27. 28, 29. and affirms it lawful to eat of such things as had been offered to Idols: *And to Eat whatsoever was Sold in the Shambles*, and what reason is there, why a Gesture should be more defiled by Idolaters, than Meat which they had offered up in Sacrifice to Idols? And why should one be sinful and Idolatrous to use, and not the other? Certainly St. Paul would never have granted them such a Privilege, if he judged it Idolatrous, to use what Idolaters had abused, especially considering that he in the same Chapter, v. 14. Exhorts them earnestly to *flee from Idolatry*.

This Position subjects the minds of Christians, to infinite Scruples and Perplexities, and naturally tends to reduce us,

to such a state and condition, in which both the *Jews* and *Gentiles* were, before the Glorious light of the Gospel, broke out upon the World: That is, it tends to beget and Propagate, a base servile Temper and Disposition towards God, and to fill us with Fears and Tremblings, when we are engaged in his Worship and Service, whereas the true and great design of the Gospel, is to breed in Men a filial chearful frame of the Heart, *The Spirit of Love and of a sound quiet Mind*, *Rom. 8. 19. 2 Tim. 1. 7.* to give us a free easy comfortable access to God, as to our Father, and to Encourage every good Man, to a diligent, constant, frequent attendance upon the Duties of his Worship, by the Pleasure and Delight that follows them; but now if nothing may be used by us without highly offending God, that either hath been or is abused unto Idolatry, who sees not what Trouble and Distraction will arise in our minds hereupon, when we meet together to Worship God? It's well known that most of our Churches were erected by *Idolatrous Papists*, and as much defiled by Idolatry as any Gesture can be: They are dedicated to several *Saints* and *Angels*, whose images were once set up and adored. Our Bells, Pews, Fonts, Desks, Church-yards, have been consecrated after a superstitious manner: Many Cups, Flagons, Dishes, Communion-Tables have been given and abused by Idolaters, what now

to be done? If Kneeling at the Sacrament be sinful, because it hath been abused by Idolaters notoriously: So also it is sinful to use any other Things or Rite that hath. If Sitting were allowed by Authority, we could not come to the Publick Churches, nor to the Sacrament, nor Christen our Children for all that, if we know the Font or other Vessels of the Church, were once abused to Idolatry by *Papists*: We must first make a diligent Search, and if certain Information cannot be had, we can't Worship God in Publick without Panick Fears, and great disquiet of Mind.

But 3. Such a Position as this will destroy all Publick Worship: For if nothing must be used, which hath been or is abused by Idolaters, it will be in the Power of Idolaters, by ingrossing all the outward Marks and Signs of that inward Veneration, which we owe to God; to smother our Devotions, so that they shall never appear in the World: And by that means, frustrate the very end and design of Religious Assemblies. And truly this Work is already, by the strength of this Principle, very well effected. For Kneeling at Prayers, and Standing and Sitting, and lifting up the Hand and Eyes to Heaven, and Bowing of the Body, together with Prayer or Praise, and Singing, have been all notoriously abused unto idolatry, and are so at this Day.

' There is a third Reason given in the
 ' same *Case*, which is worthy to be observed,
 ' our Dissenting Brethren (saith the *Case*)
 ' Condemn themselves, in what they allow
 ' and practice, by the same Rule by which they
 ' Condemn Kneeling at the Sacrament, and
 ' other Rites of our Church. For they them-
 ' selves did use, without scruple, such places
 ' and things and Postures as had been defiled
 ' and abused by *Idolaters*. They were wont to
 ' be Bare-headed, in Divine Worship and
 ' Prayer, and at the Sacrament; and so do
 ' Idolatrous *Papists*. They never affirmed
 ' that it was sinful to Kneel at Prayers, both
 ' Publick and Private; and yet this Gesture,
 ' the *Papists* use in their Prayers to the *Virgin*
 ' *Mary*, to the *Cross*, to *Saints* and to *Angels*.
 ' They used our Churches, Church-yard and
 ' Bells, and never thought they sinned against
 ' God by so doing, though they knew
 ' they had been abused. Nay, the *Directory*
 ' declares that Such places
 Direct. of the day ' are not subject to any Su-
 and place of Wors. ' perstition formerly used, and
 ' now layd aside, as may render them unlawful and
 ' inconvenient.

Rutherf. of Scan-
 dal q. 5. 6.

' Mr. Rutherford, saith of
 Bells grossly abused in time
 ' of Popery, that it is Unrea-
 ' sonable and groundless, that thereupon they should
 ' be disused. Upon which the reverend Dr.
 ' Faulkner hath this judicious remark; the pre-
 ' sence of their convenient usefulness, would be

no better excuse on their behalf than was that plea, for sparing the best of the *Amalekites* Cattle, that they might be a sacrifice, when God had devoted them to Destruction; for if God (as they say) hath Commanded that such things, and Rites should be utterly abolished, as were of Man's devising, and had been abused unto Idolatry, then the convenient usefulness of such places, and things will never bear them out.

To conclude (saith the *Case*) if Kneeling be unlawful, because it hath been abused unto Idolatry, then we must never receive the Sacrament. For we must receive in some convenient Posture, such as Kneeling, Sitting, Discombing, Standing, and yet every one of these, either have been, or is Notoriously abused, by *Heathens* and *Papists*, to Idolatrous ends.

I might add several Reasons more out of the same *Case*, but I think these to be sufficient, and they appear to me to be of such weight, as should convince any reasonable Man, that Kneeling at the receiving of the Sacrament, can never be *Superstitious* or *Idolatrous*, nor consequently *Unlawful*, because that Gesture is abused by the *Papists* to *Idolatrous ends and purposes*. I will conclude this point, with one passage of Mr. *Baxter* himself, which is to be seen at the end of the same *Case*, and which should bear some Authority among our Brethren, seeing his Author is of so great Esteem, and Veneration amongst them.

Thus

Mr. Baxter's Christian Direct. part. 2. p. III. quest. 3. §. 40.

Thus he Writes; For Kneeling I never heard any thing to prove it unlawful; if there be any thing, it must be either some Word of God, or the Nature of the Ordinance, which is supposed to be contradicted. But there is no Word of God for or against it. Christ's Example can never be proved, so oblige us more in this than in many other Circumstances, that are confessed not obligatory, as that he delivered but to Admirals, and but to a Family, to Twelve, and after Supper, and on a Thursday Night, and in an upper Room, &c. and his Gesture was not such a Sitting as ours. And 2. for the Nature of the Ordinance, it is mixt; and if it be Lawful to take a Pardon from the King upon our Knees, I know not what can make it unlawful, to take a Sealed Pardon from Christ (by his Embassadors) upon our Knees.

Now it appears plainly, that this Position of our Dissenting Brethren cannot be true: That Kneeling at the Sacrament is Superstitious and Idolatrous, because it is abused by Papists to Idolatrous ends and purposes. I say this cannot be true, either if you consider this Gesture of Kneeling in its self, and in its Nature, or because it is Kneeling at the Sacrament, or because it is Superstitiously and Idolatrously abused by the Papists. If Kneeling cannot be Superstitious or Idolatrous in any of these respects, it can't be so at all, and therefore it is not sinful, and consequently it cannot be a just cause of Separation. I have

I have one Position of the Dissenters more to Examine, and that is, *that sitting at the Sacrament is more conform to our Saviour's Institution, and more like a Table gesture, which was that of Christ at that time, and therefore it is more proper.* I have several reasons to oppose unto this Position.

1. Though we should grant the whole Proposition, yet our Brethren could not thereby justify their Separation from us. For suppose it was true that our Saviour was *sitting* when he instituted the holy Sacrament, and that gesture to be more becoming a Table gesture than kneeling; as long as it can't be proved that *kneeling* is forbidden in Scripture, and that it is unlawful, can it be a just cause of Separation? And is there not much more danger of sinning in breaking the Peace and Unity of the Church by Separating, because it may appear that our Saviour was sitting when he instituted the Sacrament, and that gesture may be more proper than kneeling because it is a Table gesture; I say Is there not more danger of sinning in this than in conforming to the established Church and kneeling at the Sacrament, notwithstanding all these pretended reasons to the contrary? Is the sin of Schism of so little consequence, and so small a fault, that men may commit it for the sake of a Sacramental gesture, which may be more convenient, and more proper, or because our Saviour observed it; this shews visibly how much our Brethren are prejudiced against the Church

Church, and how little sensible they are of the Sin of Schism.

But 2. if they could prove that our Saviour commanded *sitting* at the Sacrament, then indeed we should be in a great fault not to obey, but 'tis what they can never do; (as the Author of the *Case of kneeling* hath made it appear) otherwise we are not obliged to it though our Saviour had done it. For Christians are not obliged to do whatever Christ did, except there be a Command, besides his doing of it: Our Saviour fasted Forty days, we are not obliged to as much as that, nor to walk upon the waters as he did, nor to delay our Baptism till we are 30 Years Old as he did. I confess his Life is an Example for us to follow in reference to Morals and Conversation, we must imitate his Piety, his Humility, Meekness, Charity, Uprightness, Self-denial and Contempt of the World, and all his other Vertues which were back'd with his Command. But that gesture of sitting, though he observed it, yet he no where Commands us to observe; neither did he it as a moral Vertue, which lays an obligation upon us to imitate. I would fain ask this Question of our Dissenting Brethren, Why they are so willing to imitate our Saviour in that particular gesture of sitting, and not in several other circumstances of that Sacrament? For Example, Why should they not observe the same day of the week, which was Thursday? Why not the same hour of the day, which was in the Evening? Why not the same

same circumstance of place, it was in an upper Room? why fasting, and not after a full meal, for it was after supper? I think there is as much reason to observe all these circumstances of times and place as that of sitting. If they say that it would be Superstitious to observe all those circumstances of time and place which Christ hath not prescribed: I say, it is not Superstitious to observe *sitting*, because our Saviour did it, as it is to do all the rest, seeing that he gave no more order for this than he did for all the rest.

3. Suppose we deny that Christ was sitting, it is not an easie matter to prove it; I cannot see how they can do it out of the Scripture, I am sure there is not one word spoken of it, either in the Three Gospels, or in the 11th Chapter of the first Epistle to the *Corinthians*, where we have the relation of that holy institution; the circumstances of time and place are mentioned in the Scripture, but we see no where that of gesture; and therefore if we were strictly tied to observe the circumstances that our Saviour observed, we should much more observe those that are mentioned in Scripture, rather than *sitting*, which is not.

If we may guess what gesture our Saviour observed in the time he instituted his Supper, it is very probable that it was a discombing or leaning posture, and not that of sitting; for it was immediately after the Celebration of the Passover, which was commonly celebrated by the Jews in that posture at that time. It

is

is true, that our Saviour might have altered this discumbing posture before he instituted the Sacrament, as he must have done to wash the feet of his disciples mentioned in the 13th Chapter of St. John which learned men put immediately after the Pass-over was ended, according to the custom of the Jews, which, was to wash themselves at that time: It is supposed, and very probably, that after our Saviour had done washing of his Disciple's feet, he instituted the holy Sacrament: but whether he resumed the same posture of lying or discumbing, is not so certain, but less probable is it that he did sit, seeing it was not the custom to sit in the time of the Pass-over.

The Dissenters say that it is no matter whether our Saviour was sitting or lying, it is sufficient that we are sure he observed a Table gesture, and if it was the custom then, and of those Countries to lye down round about the Table, for a Table gesture, it is now the custom of this Country to sit for a Table gesture; and we pretend not to sit because Christ did. But we observe a Table gesture, because he observed one.

I have several things to reply to this.

1. It appears that our Brethren by this Exception lay no more any Obligation of sitting at the Sacrament because our Saviour did sit, so that his Example in that respect must be no more the Rule of this gesture in the Sacrament; No, but the custom of the Country must be our Rule, and because it is the custom

custom here in *England* to sit at our common and civil Feasts, therefore we must also sit at the Sacrament. Is not this a good argument to prove the necessity of sitting? Not from the Example of Christ, but from the common Custom of our Country. I hope an Order of the Superiors of the Church to kneel, may lay as strong an Obligation upon us in Religious matters, as a Country fashion, and be as good a Warrant for us to comply with their Ordinance, as this reason for a Table gesture. Now I wonder how our Brethren can find fault with us for observing some Ceremonies in Divine Worship which have no Command in Scripture, when they plead so much for sitting at the Sacrament as a Table gesture, which can be of no force but only in what is taken from the custom of the place. Therefore (saith the Author of the case of kneeling) it behoves our Brethren not to be so fond of this Table gesture, as they love the life of their Cause, I am sure no greater argument can be afforded of a routed baffled cause, in the matter of sitting at the Sacrament, than to see the Patrons of it running up and down in confusion and flying for refuge sometimes to the Command of Christ, then to his Example, and now to the custom of the place:

2. To answer more positively to this pretended Table gesture, it must be a Table gesture, because the Sacrament is a Feast, say they; and a Banquet, and that Table gesture must be according to the custom of the Country.

Country. Yes, all that might be so, if the Sacrament was such a feast as our Civil feasts are; and in that case not only a Civil Table gesture should be required and necessary, but also all other things that are required in Civil feasts: Such as plenty of all delicious meats and liquors, pleasant and merry Company, Eating and Drinking as much as there is occasion: Such things as these are as necessary parts of a feast, as a Table gesture: I would fain ask our Dissenting Brethren, if they observe in the Sacrament the same ways and methods that are usually observed in Common and Civil Banquets? If they say, No, why then will they observe the same Table gesture as is observed in Common feasts? Why should there be more Obligation for a Table gesture, then for sitting together round a Table, which is so essential to a feast? And yet few of the Dissenters do observe it, for Commonly the Minister sits alone at the Table and the People in their Pews, where seldom is any Table, and there they receive the Sacrament from their Minister. Whoever will take notice of their way of receiving the Sacrament, will never judge it to be like a Civil feast of which they observe no other parts but that of sitting, and that too in their Pews without Table or Cloth, except it be the Table where the Minister sits alone, as if none but he was worthy to sit at the Table, and all the People any where else, as his Servants and Attendants.

Besides

Besides, if the Sacrament must be performed in the same manner, as our Common and Civil Feasts, then it should not be done in the Church, nor in any Religious way of Worship; but they should do it in a Common and Civil Place, at their own Home or at a Friends House, that it might have all the Properties of a civil Feast, and there should be as much reason for this as for Sitting: But our Brethren not only do not Celebrate the Sacrament out of their Religious Congregations, but even would think it a great Prophanation to do it in that manner, and observe all other usages of Civil Feasts; if therefore they grant, that the Sacrament is not like our Civil Feasts in all respects, why would they have it to be like them more in reference to a Table Gesture, than in any other respects?

3.^o It is to be considered, that the Passover which was the Sacrament, answerable to that of the Lord's Supper, was also called a Feast; yet, if we take notice of the first Institution of it, when the *Israelite* were in *Egypt*, they were not to observe a Table Gesture in the Celebration of it; in after times the *Jews* altered the Manner of Eating the Passover; but when God instituted it, he Commanded the People of *Israel* to Celebrate it in *Egypt* after this Manner, *Exod. 12. With their Loyns girt, their shoes on their Feet, and their Staff in their Hands.* All signs of haste indeed (saith the Case of Kneeling) But no Feast or Table Gestures, either among the *Jews*

or the Egyptians. If God was pleased to prescribe a particular Gesture for the Sacrament of the Passover, our Saviour had prescribed one also in instituting his Supper; if he had thought, that a Table Gesture was in any thing necessary to that Sacrament; but though God did prescribe a particular Gesture for the Passover, yet our Saviour prescribed none for his Supper; therefore our Saviour did not think it necessary, that a certain particular Table Gesture should be observed before any other.

Besides, this very example of the Passover furnishes us with another reason against the Table Gesture, though our Saviour had observed one in his Sacrament, God commanded the *Israelites* in *Egypt*, to observe a particular Gesture in the Passover; and yet after they were gone out of *Egypt*, and settled in the Country of *Canaan*; that People did alter this Gesture. For it is certain, in the time of our Saviour, they did lie down, or lean one upon another in Eating that Sacrament, which was quite different from its first institution; and yet our Saviour far from finding fault with their alteration in that respect, doth not only say nothing to the contrary, but even complies with them, and conforms himself to the custom of *lying*, or *Discombing*, as the *Jews* did: Which he would not have done, if he had thought that the reason God had to recommend that particular Gesture in *Egypt*, was to be of the same force

force in *Juda*. Therefore seeing the *Jews* did not think themselves obliged to observe the same Gesture, which their Fathers did observe in *Egypt*, though their was a command of God for it, because there was a particular reason for them to observe it in *Egypt*, which did subsist no more when they were in *Juda*. With less reason are Christians obliged to observe a Table Gesture in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, though it was true that our Saviour observed one. And why might not Christians have the Liberty to alter their Gesture in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, as well as the *Jews* had to alter theirs in the Passover?

4. And lastly, it is certain, that such a Table Gesture as that of our common Feasts, doth not so well agree with the Nature of the Holy Sacrament, as an humble and Devout Gesture, such as Kneeling is. For though that Sacrament is called a *Feast*, a *Banquet*, and the *Table of the Lord*, yet it is a Feast very different from our common Feasts, both in its Nature, and in its End and Purpose, for it is an Heavenly and Spiritual Feast, appointed to feed our Souls, and not our Bodies, as our common Feasts are. The Body and Blood of Christ, are the sacred Food that our Souls Feed on; the Pardon of our Sins, our Reconciliation with God, and the precious Gift of his Holy Spirit, are tendered to us under the outward Elements of Bread and Wine. What relation

hath all this to a Common Feast, to oblige us to receive it in a Table Gesture? And though it keeps the Name of a Feast, hath it not rather the nature and properties of a Religious Worship? Will our Brethren deny that all the Parts of the Holy Sacrament, are to be performed in an Humble and Devout Manner? Why then should we not also keep an Humble and Devout Gesture, answerable to the Nature of it? And even the deepest Reverence should be Expressed in that time, in lifting up our Hands to God, and Bowing down our Bodies as an act of our Communion with him, and as our admittance unto his Throne of Grace.

I grant that this Sacrament is called an *Holy Communion*, because the faithful of God Communicate one with another in it; but we enter thereby into an Holy Communion with God and with Christ, as well as one with another. And it is called *the Lord's Table*, because the Lord is he, who there entertains and Feasts us, even with his Flesh and Blood; therefore it is very just and reasonable, that we appear there in a Posture becoming the great Lord who invites us, and entertains us with his Heavenly Food.

To sit at the Table of the Lord, would denote an equality and an intimate Familiarity with Christ, more than a Temporal Prince would allow to his Subjects. It is true, Christ is our Friend, and he is pleased to call himself our Brother; but these Relations of
Grace

Grace and Friendship, do not destroy his Infinite and Divine perfections, he is the great Lord and Master of Heaven and Earth, *Before whom every Knee must bow*: But especially we must bow down our Knees to him, when we are begging for his most tender Benefits, even his Flesh and Blood: And we must Bow before God his Father, when we make an Humble Confession of our Sins, and put up before him the Sacrifice of his beloved Son, as the meritorious cause of that Pardon we sue to him for. And this we do in the Holy Sacrament; therefore if all those Performances are Religious, if we must express then our Devotion, Piety, Humility, Charity; If our Souls must be then Worshipping and Adoring that Merciful God and Saviour; why should not our Bodies express our inward Worship and Adoration by the most Humble Gesture?

In a Word, when we receive the Sacrament, we are in the Church together, not to Feast with our Neighbours and Friends as we commonly do in our own Houses, but to be Feasted by Christ, to Worship and Adore God, and to obtain our Peace and Reconciliation; therefore it is much more suitable to the Purpose of our Meeting, that we keep that Gesture which becomes best the design of it, which is not to take our Rest and Pleasure, as those that sit at common Feasts do, but that we may perform the

most Devout part of Divine Worship; and the fittest Gesture for that is Kneeling. Thus it appears plainly enough, that tho' sitting be a Table Gesture in our Common Feasts, yet it is not proper for that Holy Feast of the Sacrament; but Kneeling, which is a posture of Humility and Devotion, signifies much better to the Nature and End of that Holy Sacrament.

Now I have examined the three exceptions which the Dissenters make commonly against that practice of our Church, Kneeling at the Receiving of the Sacrament; and I think I have plainly made it appear, that these exceptions are very groundless, and therefore can never justify our Brethrens Separation. 1. Kneeling is no unlawful Part of Communion, since it is neither Article of Faith, nor imposed as a Divine Precept, nor Contradicted by the Word of God, but an outward Manner of Worship, which the Superiors of the Church have Power to establish as a means to promote Piety and Devotion, and make our Service more acceptable to God. 2. Kneeling is neither Superstitious nor Idolatrous; for the doing of it is directed to God only, who is the sole Object of that Worship, and altho' it hath been, and still is abused by some to Idolatrous uses, as long as the Church declares her abhorrence of those abuses, they can never be imputed to her. Lastly, Kneeling is a fit Gesture to express our Devotion to God, and therefore

therefore more proper for the Sacrament, than sitting, which is a Table Gesture. From all this I conclude, that Kneeling at the Sacrament can never be a just and lawful cause of a Separation from the Church.

Thus have I performed the Second part of this Undertaking, which was to answer the Objections of the Dissenters, whereby they pretend to prove the lawfulness of their Separation. I think I have omitted none that are of any consequence to their cause, and which regard their People in general; if there be any which are not mentioned here, I am certain that some of the answers which I gave to the others, may be applied in general, to all that can possibly be said for their cause.

Now I must declare, before I conclude, that my design in this undertaking, is merely to deliver freely my thoughts upon this matter, in behalf of those that may not be acquainted with the Nature of their Separation. I do verily believe it to be sinful, and have given the Reasons I have to believe it to be so; And if I am in a mistake, I shall be obliged to any Body, who will take the Pains to shew me my Errour. But whereas I had purpose to provoke nobody to anger, but only to do as much good as I could, may one among our Dissenting Brethren, thinks himself obliged to make an Apology for this Cause, and to take the trouble to Answer me, I would exhort him to it in the same

Spirit of Peace and Charity, as a lover of Truth, without any Gaiety or Bitterness. I shall be always ready to yield to any strong and convincing Arguments and Reasons: Nay, I sincerely declare, that I should be glad that this Separation was in Truth and Effect cleared of any sinfulness: For as it is matter of Sorrow and Trouble, to see so great a part of the Nation engaged in that Separation, which I think to be sinful; so it will be very Comfortable to me, and to any other good Christian, if so be it is made known, that this Separation is free from Sin, and very agreeable to the Spirit of Christianity. But if this cannot be done, and if no such convincing Reasons can be given, I wish our Dissenting Brethren would enter into a serious Consideration of their Dangerous State, that they would put an end to this Woful and Lamentable Schism, repair the Breaches of the Church, give Glory to God, and restore Peace, Unity and Concord, among the Members of Christ, and the Children of God.

CONCLUSION.

NOW dear Brethren in Jesus Christ, and my Neighbours, I will apply my self in particular to you, that I may, in order to a Conclusion, give you some Pastoral advice in relation to this matter.

I. I would require those of you, that are already engaged in this Separation from our Church,

Church, to consider that this subject I have been treating of, is of very great Consequence: No matters of Religion are to be slighted, but above all, you must consider, that if your Separation from the Church be unlawful, as I have made it appear that it is, then you live in a State of Sin. And instead of doing Service to God, by your taking so much pains, in going from Home in Order to your Religious Performances, and under pretence of better Edification, you rather Provoke God against you, and by your continuance in that woful State, increase more and more the guilt of your Sin: Therefore pray consider that your Separation is no indifferent matter; Religion is not a thing that you may change at pleasure, as you do your Garments. If the Church of *England* be a true Church of Christ, and if you think you can please God and serve him, and Work out your Salvation in the Communion of it, you ought not to Separate from it, since you cannot do it without breaking the Peace and Unity of the Body of Christ, which is the Church, and without falling into the Commission of the Horrid Sin of Schism.

II. I would have you to enter into a serious consideration of the Motives, which may have engaged you in the Dissenting party. I suppose these motives may be referred to these three Heads, Conscience, Education, or some Worldly respects.

First,

First, perhaps some of you (though I may believe, and not do you any wrong, very few have been induced to it by this motive) are entred into the Dissenting Party, out of Conscience, by a meer Principle of Religion; in relation to such persons, I have but little to add to that, which I have already said in this Book; there can be but a blind and seduced Conscience, that will dissuade you from the Church of *England*; therefore it is your business to instruct your Conscience, to weigh and Ponder the Dangers of that Sin you are fallen into, to devest your selves of all prejudices that you have taken up wrongfully against the Church, considering whether those prejudices were the Fruit and Prouduction of a serious and well-grounded Deliberation, and whether even you have examined, that it was possible that a Separation from the Church was sinful. If you have not made this examination, I do earnestly recommend it to you, that you would seriously enter into it now: For this is a matter of very great Moment, and perhaps no less than the Salvation of your Souls depends upon it. Let therefore this be done with a great deal of caution, let nothing but pure Conscience and Religion, with a Spirit truly Christian guided by the Sacred Word of God, move you to fix your Resolutions. Advise with Eminent Men on both sides, and take care not to rely so much upon your own Judgment, as upon that of such Persons who may have better

better abilities than you have, and who have no interest to deceive you. But above all, make your Addresses unto God Almighty, that he may inspire you, and lead you in the way which is most acceptable to his Divine Majesty: If you take God for your Guide, and implore his Blessing and Assistance with all due qualifications, free from all sorts of Worldly respects, and entirely void of all Personal or Humane Considerations, you may be sure he will hear your Prayers, and direct you into the right Way.

The second motive that may have engaged some of you in this Separation, is your first Education; your Parents, or those that have had the first Cares of your instruction, may have infused into your Minds those prejudices which you have against our Church, and they may have made this choice of Religion, which in imitation of them, you have likewise made without any further examination. If it be so, I would have you to consider, how weak the Principle is you found your Religion upon, and how easily you may have been deceived. For I hope that you do not pretend that your Parents or those that were entrusted with your instruction had the Gift of Infallibility; 'tis possible they were mistaken themselves, and consequently have misled you, your thinking they were Persons too Good and too Devout to be seduced, and to seduce others, will not justify theirs and your Separation if it be sinful. It is very certain,

Certain, that in all false Religions, there are a great many Honest and sincere Persons, who are engaged in their Errors and false and Idolatrous Worships, who if they had the opportunities of being made sensible of their Errors, would not long continue in them; they are ignorant, and wanting the Advantages of Learning, miserably Perish in their ignorance, notwithstanding their Honest and Innocent intentions. Wherefore it is your Duty to Renounce those Prejudices of Education, you are of Age to choose your Religion your selves, and not to make your Faith depend upon that of another: You have a Reason as well as your Parents, and you must make use of it, void of all Earthly and Humane Considerations, to help you in the right way. And the same Examination which I have recommended to those of you, who Separate from us by a Motive of Conscience, I recommend to you also: Make this Examination your chief Business, and perform all the Parts of it sincerely, exactly in the the Fear of God, and with a Christian desire to please him, and work out your Salvation.

Thirdly and Lastly, Humane Considerations and Worldly Interests, are but too often the chief motives which engage Men in the Dissenting Party: I am sorry to see that some of you have showed to the World but too plainly, that some such things have been

been the only cause of of your Separation from your Parish Church.

Pray consider, whether such a Motive of changing your Religion be not very displeasing and injurious to God? And if it be not, to make your Religion a pretence to serve an Humane Passion, or an Earthly design and purpose? I will not enter into particulars in that respect, but I say, what greater contempt of Religion can be expressed and exposed to the view of the World, than to make it an Instrument of Hatred or Revenge, or of getting Worldly Riches, or of compassing any such Humane and Earthly purpose? An injury or offence that you may think you have received from your Parish Minister, may have caused your Separation from the Church; or you that are a Young Man, and look after a Rich Wife, may have been enticed to go to the Meeting to try for such a Fortune; or you that propose to your self to be admitted to the Favour of a considerable Dissenter, whose Friendship you covet for a particular reason, best known to your self, may have been induced to follow the same Course: I will not accuse any particular Persons, but only desire you to consider, whether any of you that have Separated from our Church upon such accounts as these, can be satisfied in your Conscience, that this is well done, and very acceptable to God? For my part, I think that any Separation from our Church is very sinful; but when it is done out of any such Humane

Humane Considerations, it aggravates much more the Guilt of it; and I am confident there is no reasonable and Conscientious Dissenter, if he will speak freely his Thoughts, but he will tell you as much as that; for this is a horrid Prophanation of Religion, which is sacred and inviolable. Can you say you go to Meetings to serve God in a better Way, and to receive better Edification, when in truth you do it only because you bear Malice against your Lawful Pastor, and have a personal prejudice against him? Or can you Plead for Scruples of Conscience, when nothing but Worldly interest forceth you to withdraw from our Church? I would have you to lay this to your Hearts, and consider how you can clear your selves before God; I say again and again, this is a matter of great Moment, examine your Hearts and Minds, if your Separation be sinful, do not make it worse, and a great deal worse, by such Worldly regards: Nay, were the Dissenting Party the best Party, and a Separation from the Church of *England* both lawful and necessary, yet to make it upon such Temporal accounts, would make it very Criminal and Odious. Wherefore, dear Brethren, let me intreat you in the Name of God, I beseech you be of another Mind, put on a true Spirit of Christianity, make no more your Religion to agree with your Passion, Humour, or Fancy, or Civil, or Worldly Interests, but let

let father all these inferior ends and purposes be ruled and guided by your Religion; and if you do say I am sure you will be soon cured of your Errors! *Be not deceived, God is not mocked; but he that soweth to the flesh shall also reap to the flesh; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall also reap to the Spirit.* After you have purged your selves of those low and earthly considerations, enter into a serious Tryal of this matter, free from all prejudices, and make Conscience of what Religion soever you profess; consider well whether you can justify a Separation from your Mother Church; from a Church, to which perhaps you have the Obligation of your first Education, and which hath all the Characters of a true Church of Christ; if by reading this Book, and any others that have been written upon this subject, you are not able to perceive your Errors, and be satisfied about your scruples of Conscience, if you have any, pray advise with good and able persons who are not willing to mislead you, and let no more partiality or favour, passion or fancy, bear any sway in your Resolutions.

III. I would have you to Consider, that the only motive which engageth me to be so earnest with you in this matter, is nothing else but a meer design to do good to your Souls; considering that I must one day give an account to our Common Lord and Master, of the Administration of my Pastoral Office, I think my self Obligated to endeavour, by all reasonable and lawful means, to reclaim you from

from a state which I really believe to be dangerous and sinful. And I declare, as being in the sight of God, who knows the Hearts and the most inward thoughts of Men, that no Humane Consideration or worldly regard whatsoever, hath the least part in this mine undertaking; the Glory of God, the Peace of the Church, and the welfare of your Souls, are the only marks I aim at: And pray do your lawful Pastor that justice, to believe that he hath no design to deceive you, nor to impose on your credulity; you see how plain and fair I have been in the managing of this Controversie, and I am sure, neither you, nor any of your Friends, can justly say that I have playd the Sophist, or conceal'd any considerable Objection that can be brought in against our Church; therefore you may easily perceive the uprightness and candor of my dealing with you in this respect.

I grant it would be a great Satisfaction and a matter of much joy to me, if by this means I could have the happiness to see you all come again to your Duty; and your constant presence in my Church would be one of the greatest comforts I am capable of receiving in this life. I may even confess that I should be proud of it: But as the good of the Church, and your eternal happiness, would be the only cause of my boasting; so I would always take care to give to God alone the Honour and Praise of your Conversion, and return him my most humble thanks for his blessings upon my weak Endeavours.

IV. I think

IV. I think it is very proper and necessary to my purpose, that I should direct my self in particular to those of you who hitherto have never had any thought of separating from our Church (God be thanked the number of such is by a great deal the most considerable.) I know there are several busie bodies among the Dissenters, who concern themselves much to make Proselytes, whether they do it out of Conscience, with a meer design of Love and Charity to their Neighbours, or whether they are prompted to it to strengthen their Party and weaken the Church, I shall not undertake to determine; but however, I think, that if Love and Charity, and real tenderness for their Neighbours Salvation, were the true motives to their earnest endeavours, they would apply themselves chiefly to those who are in the greatest want of Reformation, and whose disorderly Lives and Conversations may excite their Charity to good and wholesome counsels, in order to the reclaiming of such from lewd and irreligious practises: But they do follow quite another method, and I know that their Charity in this matter, does not extend so far as to them that have most occasion of it. They bend their affections and zeal altogether towards those, who they think have natural inclinations to goodness, and appear averse to any scandalous and prophane behaviour. These are commonly the Objects of their cares, and will leave no stone unturned till they have perswaded them to
their

their Party, in raising prejudices and scruples of Conscience in their minds against the Church of *England*, and magnifying, to a high degree, both the Preaching and Praying of their Dissenting Ministers, to the contempt and disparagement of their lawful pastors, whom they abuse and slander but too often at a sad rate. I think such a behaviour doth make it appear plainly, that they rather aim at the general advantage and credit of their Party, to make it flourish and triumph over the Church, which giveth them occasion to boast of the great proficiencies of their Ministry, than at the real good and salvation of the Souls of Men. They would fain pick up all the good Corn and leave us the Tares: Wherefore I think it very necessary to apply my self to you all that are members of our Church, and especially to those of you that are the most conscientious, that you may be warned against the attempts and unwearied importunities of those Persons, whom in that respect, I cannot forbear to call our *Adversaries*, who go to and fro to seduce, if it were possible, the elect of God.

i. I would have you to Confirm your selves more and more in your Holy Profession, and let your confirmation be laid upon a sure Bottom, a right understanding and perfect knowledge of your Religion: We Ministers of the Church of *England*, are very far from recommending to you an implicit Faith, as the Doctors of the Church of *Rome* do to their People, who maintain them in a blind ignorance

rance of any Religious Matters, that they may never be acquainted with their Extravagant and Ridiculous Errors, and Unreasonable Practices. No, the Doctors of the Church of *England* think and teach, that the Members of the Church can never be too much instructed in all the Parts of Religion, both Doctrinal and Practical: They know nothing themselves in those respects, but what they wish every one of their Hearers was acquainted with. Therefore we dayly recommend unto our People, a diligent enquiry into, and an exact examination of all Points of Faith, and of all the practices of our Church: Accordingly I would have you to apply your selves carefully to the understanding and knowledge of the Doctrine of our Church; that you may see clearly how well agreeing it is with that of Christ revealed to us in his Gospel, of the Decency and Comeliness of her Worship, as being very useful to promote Piety and Devotion, to encourage good Morals, and to render the Service of her Members agreeable to God, and to secure their Eternal Felicity in another World.

If you are sincere Lovers of the Church, you must make much of her, performing all parts of her Holy Ordinances, with Zeal and Fervour, with Care and Devotion, omitting none of those Duties, which are of a very great use to make Men perfect in all good Works: you must endeavour, as much as you can, to be present at the very beginning of Di-

vine Service, that you may joyn with your Minister, especially in that most Necessary and Excellent part of our Liturgy, the Confession of Sins and the Absolution. I may confidently say, that your constant Attendance on those Holy Duties, will increase more and more your Affection and Tenderness for the Church: The more you are acquainted with her Service, the more you shall be confirmed in the Profession of it: For I am perswaded, that most part of the Dissenters, who not only find fault with our Common-prayerBook, but even rail at it, are not at all acquainted with it, and perhaps did never Read it; if this be not to speak Evil of what they know not, I cannot tell what is; such Persons are averse to any just information; they will tell you, they want no further instruction, and they are satisfied already, when they cannot give any reason for their Scruples, nor wherenpon to ground their exceptions against the Church. Therefore, with reason, I say, that the more you are acquainted with our Divine Service and Worship, the more you shall be convinced of the Lawfulness and Usefulness of it: And this I recommend to you, as being the best Method you can observe, to be confirmed in the Communion of our Church,

2. When you are once confirmed and settled in this Profession, I would have you take care that your Children and Servants, and others that are under your Care, be brought

up and confirmed in those Principles of Religion, which you have your selves: It is not only just and reasonable, but even your Duty to instill those good Principles into the Hearts and Minds of those that are about you; considering, that the first impressions of Education that are given to young People, do commonly abide longer, and take the deepest Root in their Hearts, let those impressions be good or bad. Therefore as you are obliged in Conscience, to give a good Example to your Children, and to bring them up in the way of Goodness and Piety, so you must be careful to turn their Minds and Affections towards all due Regard, and a high value for the Church, and all her Holy Ordinances, avoiding to speak Contemptuously of her Ministers, and never suffering the same in your Children, or in those that are about you.

3. And Lastly, if ever any of you are tempted to change your Religion, I would have you not to do it without an accurate and careful Examination, both of the Matter it self, and of the Motives that may induce you to this Change.

First, of the Matter it self, as it is of very great consequence, so you are to proceed in it with a great deal of Circumspection, in examining your selves, the Reasons and Arguments that are brought in on both sides, consulting and advising with such Persons which you think have better light than your selves,

selves, and Reading such Books as maybe recommended to you, by those who may have no interest to deceive you. But especially it is your Duty, if ever you have any thought of Separating from the Church, to acquaint your Parish Minister with your design, and lay before him the reasons you have to ground your dissatisfaction on, whether it be of our Worship, or Church Government; and if he be not able to resolve your Queries, and give you a full satisfaction (though I hope he may have Abilities enough for this, except you be strongly prepossessed by other Motives than that of Religion) then you must make your application to some other Eminent and Discreet Minister of our Church, before whom you must lay down your Reasons and Scruples, and to whose Answers you must conscientiously hearken and attend, avoiding all vain disputations and strifes: And I am sure, if you thus proceed in the matter, and use these means in the Fear of God, you shall soon be cured of any purpose to change your Religion. The sinfulness of a Separation will appear so plain and evident to you, that for the time to come, the most accute and importunate Dissenter, shall not be able to succeed in any attempt whatsoever towards it.

But Secondly, As you are obliged to enquire seriously and particularly into the Matter it self, if you have ever any thought of turning Dissenter: So in the same *Case*, you are
to

to consider what Motives bring you to this change; if you are good Christians, and really desirous to please God, and work out your Salvation, you will never suffer your selves to be withdrawn from the Church, but by a meer Motive of Conscience, when you are fully satisfied that your Separation is both Lawful and Necessary; but take heed that no Humane Considerations, or Worldly regards have ever any Hand in such a Resolution: For as I said before, tho a Separation from our Church were Lawful, yet to enter into it out of such respects, it will be granted by all reasonable Dissenters, that it becomes very sinful: But that which will make it still worse, is the doing of it to an ill purpose, as in spight to your Minister, and to be revenged of him, if it was possible to be done that way. As this is a mocking of God, and of his Religion, so it is a Crime of a very high degree, which I would have you to keep your selves clear of. If ever any difference happens between you and your Minister, you are to make your best endeavours for a speedy reconciliation, using all possible means in order to it; and if you cannot compose the Matter, and restore Peace amongst your selves, even with the interposition of some Friends, you ought not for this to Separate from the Church of *England*. But in case you think you cannot be Edified by your Minister, you are rather to joyn you selves to another Neighbouring Parish Church, for your attendance on

Divine

Divine Service: but yet you are to take care, not to do this but after a Tryal of all reasonable means of Peace and Reconciliation with your own Minister, and that you have evidently justified your proceedings in that matter, so that the blame of your Separation from him, lies altogether on his side.

Thus have I freely given my advice to you good Neighbours, and dear Brethren: And though I design it, and this whole Work in particular, for your Good and Advantage, because you are all under my care; yet whereas both are of a general use, I heartily wish their influence and success may be as general: I shall be glad to see, that the pains I have taken in Writing these Lines be not altogether in vain. And I Pray Almighty God to fill the Hearts of our Dissenting Brethren with a sense of their Sin, to inspire them with a Spirit of Peace and Unity, of Love and Charity, and that as we are all the redeemed of the same *Jesus*, as we have all the same Faith and the same Hopes, so we may all joyn together in the same Communion, and in the same Church, and with one Heart, and one Mouth, *Glorifie the Father of us all, which is in Heaven.*

F I N I S.